

Candid Conversation With Tom Heinsohn

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CELTICS PRIDE

Volume 5 Issue 11
Number 91
May 11, 1990

Sound Off

Dear Sound Off,
Being a Celtic fan for as long as I can remember, I was wondering, how could I get information on buying shares of stock in the Celtic organization?
Good luck Celtics! I know no other team will ever be better than my Celtics!!

Jessica Heide
Noonan, ND

In order to obtain information regarding the purchase of Celtics' stock, all you have to do is contact any stockbroker and they will be able to assist you.

Dear Sound Off,

Again I see that Detroit and Bill Laimbeer are able to get away with their dirty play and cheap shots. I was glad to see that Barkley landed a punch on him, but he deserved a lot more. I know the NBA fined him \$20,000 for the fight, but most of his cheap shots don't result in fights so there is no fine. And furthermore, what is \$20,000 to Bill Laimbeer? And a suspension for the last game of the regular season is a joke. I can't believe that David Stern lets him get away with everything he does. He is an embarrassment to the NBA. One of these times he's going to permanently injure a player. It doesn't matter whether the player is a superstar or not — somebody's career could be over and Laimbeer will be fined \$20,000 and his life will go on.

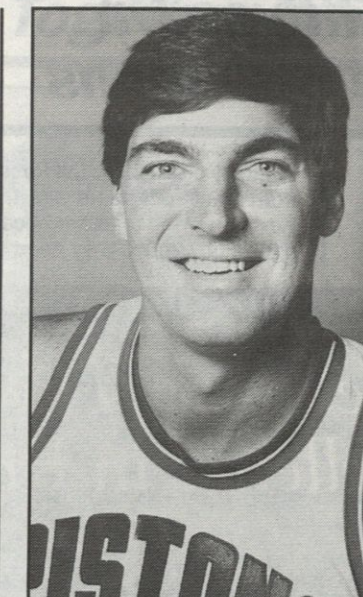
The league must think he helps TV ratings or something. What can be done to clean up his act?
John Daniel
Meriden, CT

We agree with you, but we are not sure what the answer is. We have heard the argument that if the referees called every foul that Detroit made the whistle would be blown everytime they go down the floor. WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?

If he fouls out in the first quarter, maybe he would be tempted to "clean up his act" as you put it.

A \$20,000 fine is like a \$20 fine to you and us — so that's not the answer. He should have been suspended into the playoffs for the fight with Barkley.

If he were to end someone's career — his career should be ended. If he injures a player which results in the player being out of action for a while, Laimbeer (or whoever), should be suspended without pay for at least twice as long as the other player is out.



Are fines going to change Laimbeer?

Last year, when Rick Mahorn purposely knocked Cleveland's Mark Price out of action for over a month — Mahorn just paid his fine and went on playing. Mahorn knew what he was doing — it was not an accident, yet Cleveland was without a key player for a long time and Detroit went on "business as usual".

In our opinion, that type of action should re-

ceive much more drastic discipline — not only to the player, but also to his coach and ownership. It will probably take a serious injury to a superstar like Bird, Jordan, or Magic for the league to change how it handles this type of situation — that would be very unfortunate.

These are our views at Celtics Pride and not the views of the Boston Celtics.

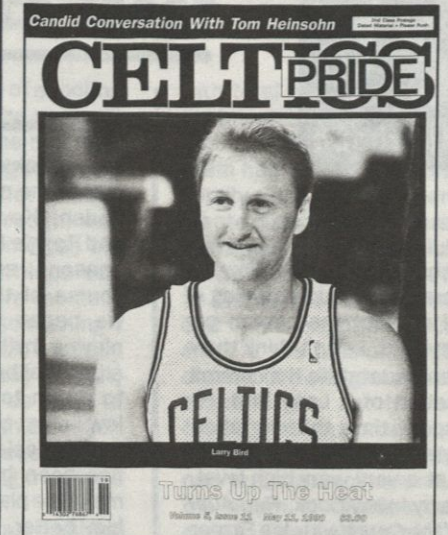
Dear Sound Off,

During the playoffs, the Pistons seem to play even dirtier than they do in the regular season. Some of their tactics are legal, but a lot are not.

When Boston plays Detroit in round two of the playoffs, the Pistons will undoubtedly use "players" like Laimbeer and Rodman to knock Bird and Parish around. The refs never seem to call anything unless the man with the ball is fouled. Is there anything the Celtics can do to protect themselves against these uncalled fouls away from the ball?

Richard Davis
Barrington, RI

If a foul is committed away from the ball, it is still a foul and should be called. In the case of the Pistons, there isn't a whole lot the Celtics can do to change the way the referees officiate the game. I can assure you, however, that the NBA's best veteran referees call the playoff games and the Pistons will be under careful scrutiny.



COVER

8Veteran Bird Still Brilliant

After his injury-enforced absence in 1988-89, Larry Bird has picked up right where he left off. Although Bird struggled early in the season, he is playing great basketball when it matters most. Larry likes the Celtics' chances in the playoffs and is eager to prove that the team still has what it takes to win the big games.

FEATURES

14Boston's Playoff Rotation Is Bringing Out Their Best

The Celtics' eight-man playoff rotation is really paying off. Coach Rodgers feels confident that the starting five will perform well throughout the playoffs, even if it means playing extended minutes.

22What "Power" Means In The Playoffs

The NBA's "Power Player" has become the focus of much public attention. Tom Heinsohn tells us that when it comes down to the playoffs, a contender's power player, or players, could mean the difference between winning and losing.

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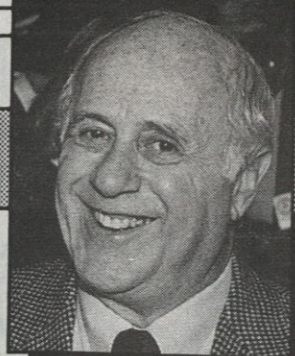
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May 11, 1990



Red On Roundball

Larry Thrives On Pressure Situations

By Red Auerbach

I think that most people who follow the Celtics have a good understanding of how much I respect the play of our captain, Larry Bird. I don't think there is any way you can understate the commitment and dedication of a Larry Bird. For years, he has spent time thinking about the game. Every season, he consistently plays the game at a very, very high level.

I discussed Larry in my book, *Red Auerbach: On and Off the Court* (with Joe Fitzgerald) in 1985. Essentially, my argument at the time was that no forward had ever made a franchise — until Larry turned our ballclub around in his rookie year in 1979-80. The theory I talked about then was that no forward could have such a great influence on the game until Bird because the guards control the ball in the offense. Obviously, times and conditions change, and have changed since we wrote that. However, Larry's great ability has remained constant. I wrote then, that in Larry's rookie year, he "...had great potential — yet I didn't dream of the surprises which were to come. I didn't realize how quick he was. I had no knowledge of his rebounding abilities. I knew he had a court presence on offense, but I didn't realize he had one on defense, too. And I had no sense of his leadership qualities, or his ability to motivate other people as well as motivating himself."

Larry's beginnings with us have remained a constant through the seasons. He is the most highly self-motivated athlete I have ever seen. He is continually setting goals for himself, and achieving them. He's the true professional: He doesn't only think the game during the seven months of the season. He thinks all twelve months. His great anticipation on the floor might just very well come from all of this. His preoccupation with the game.

Because of what he's achieved, and because of the very high standards he sets for himself, Bird had a difficult time earlier in the year. He had been out for the better part of a whole season, and he wanted to come back and be the Bird of old instantly. I told him earlier this year that it probably would take him much longer than that, but that his play was pretty good anyway. That he shouldn't let things bother him, or affect his game. He didn't, I'm glad to say, and right now he's playing great basketball.

I spoke above of how he is always setting goals for himself. One that he did set for this season, I'm told, is to improve his rebounding. He's had a very strong season on the boards this season, averaging 9.5 rebounds a game. Larry's a tremendous position rebounder, and again, it relates to his drive. He'll out fight players for rebounds, because of his desire. Judgment and anticipation are decisive factors in getting the ball off the boards, and as noted, Bird's at the top in these areas.

Our season has shaped up to be a very good one; part of this is Larry's return to his game. His abilities as a superstar have always made us a contender, but this sea-

son, I think we've really seen how great the rest of the players are around him. Robert Parish, Kevin McHale, Dennis Johnson and Reggie Lewis have had very, very good seasons, and over the course of the year, as we began to find our playing rhythm, Larry realized that he didn't have to return to his former level all at once. One of Bird's priceless qualities has been his ability to make the players around him better, and as we headed into the postseason, we've been playing well.

Have there been special games or moments which stand out for me when thinking about Larry Bird? I don't think so: There have been so many. Bird's speciality has always been winning.

Has his approaching the age of 33 (at the end of this year) affected his game? Again, no; age is something that is more on the minds of fans, in my opinion. Bird's play hasn't fallen off. To my way of thinking, he just goes out and plays and doesn't concern himself with age. Larry knows what needs to be done about what I said above — winning. There are adjustments you make as you become a veteran player, but these things have a lot to do with the particular team you're playing on. Bird has played with the same essential nucleus for years. Any adaptations he makes come within the team context. Subtle things. But these change and Larry's intelligent enough to work on the parts of his game that need it, as conditions on the team, or in the game change, too.

He's been fortunate, too, playing under guys like K.C. Jones, Jimmy Rodgers and Bill Fitch. Fitch was a very good teacher for Bird in the early years. Both K.C. and Jimmy have allowed him freedom of expression, and in the middle eighties, his game just took off, and three Most Valuable Player awards and two Finals' MVP's demonstrate this truth.

The Celtic frontcourt power is something that

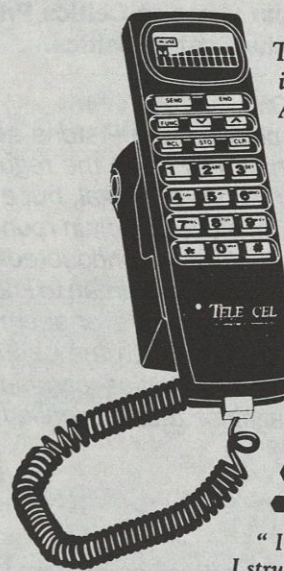
is widely discussed. Bill Russell made the statement four years ago that Larry and Kevin play well together because they recognize how much they need each other to

be effective. That's very well said. We've played better as the starting team has jelled, and although Kevin has started in the last three months, I couldn't pinpoint the lineup change as the reason. We've been effective with Larry and Kevin playing together, but it's at the end of games that matters. It isn't the starting lineup which counts — it's as the team on the floor at the finish.

And it's not an accident that among Bird's great qualities, one of his most extraordinary is his ability under pressure. He's brilliant then, because at the end of games, he doesn't fear responsibility for the outcome.

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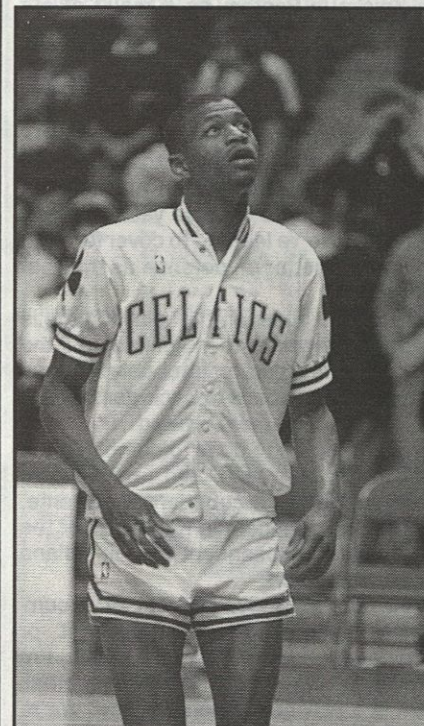
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Celtics Confidential

Coming Together When It Counts Most

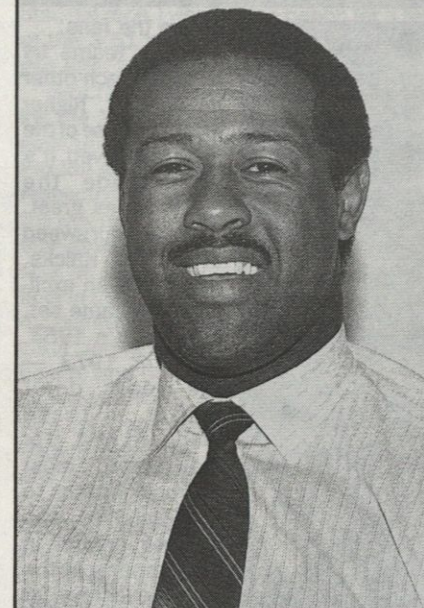
By Bob Schron

Playoff Confidential. The Celtics seriously considered placing their recently re-signed young guard, **Brain Shaw**, on their playoff roster, a decision that had to be made on April 23rd, one day after the regular season ended. Shaw, the team's top draft choice in 1988, signed with the Italian League's *Il Messaggero* last summer, and in late April, averaging over 25 ppg, had led the team into the playoffs. Shaw would have been eligible to join the Celtics when the Italian League's playoffs were over. In the end, the Celtics chose not to place Shaw on the roster. "There undoubtedly would have been times Brian could have helped (in the playoffs)", said Celtics coach **Jimmy Rodgers** at practice last week as the C's prepared to meet the Knicks in the opening round. "But we just felt that the 1989-90 team is here, right now, and this is the team which played its way to this position. We're playing very well right now (the C's won 9 of their last 10 games in the regular season.) We looked at a lot of different things, but this team has worked very hard this season to get to the point where we're playing well. It (The 1989-90 team) earned its shot to win." ...A sound decision, it says here. Shaw will be a major contributor to this team in the future, but the current Celtics are playing as well as they have all year, and it's taken a full season for the group to adjust to the roles, rotation, and



Lewis averaged over 24 points per game during the final week of the season.

the fact that Rodgers is serious when he says that he'll go to any of the 12 players at any time, depending on the situation. With all of the stress on "team play" and "chemistry", it takes a major sacrifice for players at this level to accept the possibility of the unexpected, regarding the rotation. To place a new player, even one as good as Shaw, would have damaged the team's cohesion, vital at this time of the year. **M.L. Carr** on the Celtics' chances in

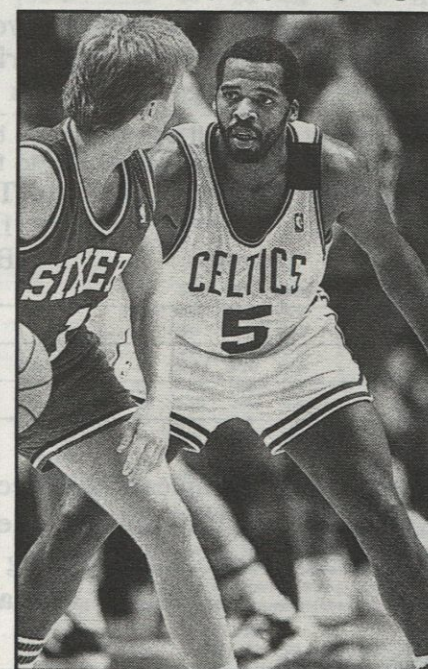


M.L. Carr: "The key is the first round against the Knicks."

the playoffs: I think they'll do well," he said of the C's. "The key is the first round against the Knicks. The best three-of-five format is scary — it's easy to get upset. I think if Boston gets through the first round in good shape, they'll be dangerous." ...*The Boston Globe's* **Bob Ryan** thought the Eastern Conference final series would most likely be Detroit against Philadelphia. Ryan thought the Celtics would defeat New York, but "I think the Pistons will defeat the Celtics in a difficult, five or six game series." However, Ryan hedged; "If the Celtics defeat Detroit, they could take it, because of their experience, and because their confidence level would be exceptionally high." ...Told that Knicks' coach **Stu Jackson** thought he was the most underrated player in the league, Boston's **Reggie Lewis** was gratified, but explained, he didn't allow himself to think about things like that. "It's always appreciated when an opposing coach says something like that. But I'm just trying to go out and work hard every game, and try to improve (every game)." ...Lewis averaged over 24 ppg during the final week of the season. "Because we're running more, pushing the ball up, so everybody's been getting more shots." ...**John Bagley** on the changes in the substitution pattern during the season: "A player always wants more playing time. But I don't think anyone took it personally, when they weren't getting (playing) time. Because I think the coaches determined time on how you were producing. If you played well, you got time. The coaches were fair." ...**Robert Parish** on the best centers in the league: "**Patrick Ewing** and **Akeem Olajuwon** are one-two, in any order, because of what they do for their teams." Asked to rank himself, Parish retorted: "A distant third." ...Rodgers thought this year's playoffs featured one of the strongest, most balanced fields in recent memory: "Because of what just the opening rounds featured: 'For example Utah-Phoenix, Cleveland-Philadelphia, and Boston-New York — there are more, of course. But we really think that it's important to start it off playing well, and continue to build our game throughout the entire postseason.'"

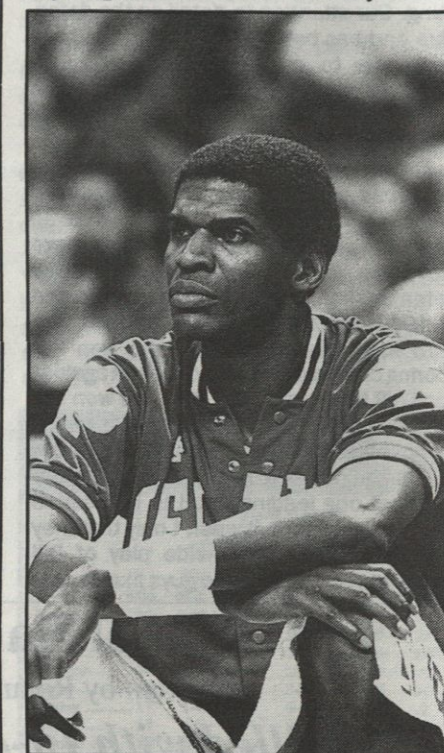
...**Larry Bird** on the importance of shooting well in relationship to his entire game: "I admit it; when I'm shooting the ball well, I'm riding high. But the shooting part of my game is temperamental; I try not to worry too much about it. The media does the worrying for me." ...Bird on the changes between playing now and earlier in his career: "I need to prepare myself more mentally now. But basketball is still something I love, something I do best. I can honestly say that when the game is ready to start, I'm out there playing as hard as I can to win." ...Bird on the comeback this season after losing virtually all of last season: "It's only now that I think I'm getting my whole game back in order."

Chris Ford on the Celtics' astonishing performance in their 157-128 win over the Knicks in Game Two of the opening round series: "It was very reminiscent of the Game One 148-114 win over the Lakers in 1985, in The Finals. Everything was clicking, and it's the type of game you sit back and hope it will only continue." ...Ford on Larry Bird: "Larry's whole season turned around when he realized he needed to stop forcing his offense. When he's looking to make the pass, he makes the entire offense more efficient. Because of the attention he draws from the opponents' defense." ...From a Knick insider during the opening round series: "Our team needs a complete overhaul." ...**Jim Paxson** on his effectiveness during the playoffs: "I'm hoping it will go well. But it's strange; people think I'm a halfcourt player, but this season most of my success has been in the open court. In the halfcourt, all of the focus is on **Dennis Johnson** and Larry (Bird). If you're moving off the ball, it's critical to hit the open shot from a spot, and it isn't always easy to find the room to get the shot you want. It's why I prefer the open floor." ...**Robert Parish** on the veteran leadership factor: "The veterans have to show the younger players two things: how to control the tempo and make sure the game is played at your pace, and the other thing is you show them ideally, that at this time of the year, you play the game



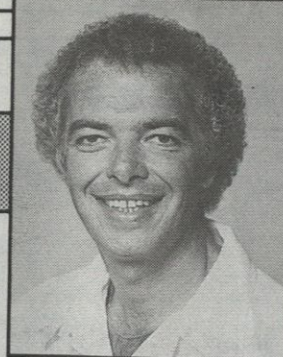
Bagley: "If you played well, you got time. The coaches were fair."

with total commitment." ...Parish on the controversies that followed the team around this season: "That's nothing new. Our team has always had controversy and adversity since I've been here. We just like to create challenges for ourselves." ...**Lanny Van Eman** on why the Knicks hypothetically went to **Maurice Cheeks** over **Mark Jackson** as the team's point guard down the stretch and in the playoffs: "Because he's a veteran. At this time of the year, every play is crucial. Cheeks gives the Knicks what our veterans give us: He recognizes breakdowns and opportunities immediately." ...Knicks' GM **Al Blanchi**, who received a one year contract extension last week on the return of **Charles Oakley** during the series: "We needed him, because of the Celtics inside game. But at least at the start, it was a cosmetic thing, more than anything else. I don't think any of our



Robert: "We just like to create challenges for ourselves."

players expected him to be a major contributor right off the bat." ...In *The Boston Globe*, **Danny Ainge**, former Celtic and present Sacramento King, thought the Celtics were a favorite to go to The Finals against the Lakers. "People talk about Detroit's great defense, and they do have that. But Bird, **Kevin McHale**, and **Reggie Lewis** are offensive players that can score against the best defenses. Maybe I'm blind, but the only team I could pick over them would be the Lakers." ...It was also reported that Ainge was contacted by the baseball Toronto Blue Jays about the possibility of returning to baseball and play a utility role for the American League team. Ainge: "The fact that I have four young kids at home makes it hard, but I really wanted to do it." ...As the Knicks headed back to New York, trailing 2-0 in the opening round playoff series against the Celtics, coach **Stu Jackson** stated, "We have to play well in New York (after the Celtics scored 157 points in Game Two). Our pride's at stake. After you've been humiliated like that....**Gerald Wilkins** promised New York would win Game Three."



By Jimmy Rodgers

Coaches Corner

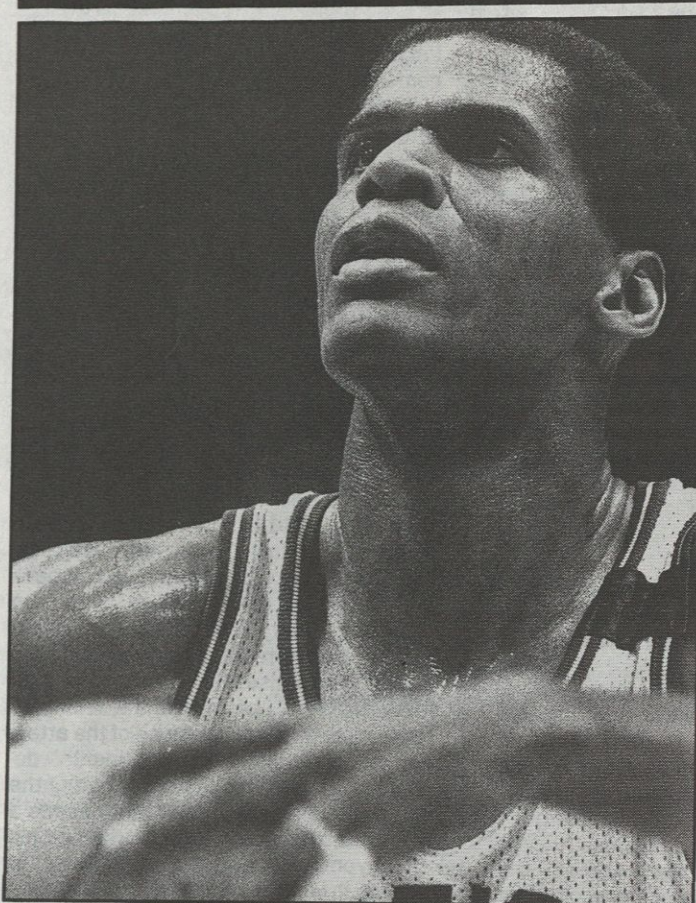
The Benefits Of Solid Fundamental Basketball

Our series against the Knicks, which began last weekend in Boston with the opening two games, generated a tremendous amount of excitement here. There were several reasons for this, uppermost I hope is that we are playing our best basketball heading into the postseason.

By winning nine of our final ten games during the regular season, I think we have finally reached a spot that we can say that we feel good about ourselves as a basketball team. Because of several reasons, most having to do with solid fundamental basketball.

We shot the ball much better, for one thing. Our attention to detail on the defensive end has been much better. We have been able to execute our offense much better as a whole, presenting teams with different looks (i.e., the halfcourt offense and the running game).

Any series against the New York Knicks, of course, has tradition as an additional angle of interest. Ever since I've been here, the Knicks and the Celtics have played each other with great intensity. We defeated them in the playoffs in 1984 and in 1987; the first matchup featured Bernard King for the Knicks, who won the scoring championship that season against our MVP that year, Larry Bird. We won the championship that season and it was a memorable year for that reason. But the series against New York was perhaps our toughest one leading into the last series against the Lakers. It wasn't only that they had Bernard, or the inside play of Bill Cartwright (or that we had guys like Dennis



Against the Knicks, the onus is probably more on Parish than anyone else.

Johnson and Danny Ainge, as well as our All-Star frontcourt. The intensity of the rivalry comes from the rivalry between the franchises. The present players then — or now — are affected by it. The media is and

of the people involved, and the different things they've done against us this season. In the beginning of the season, they had great success pushing the ball up the floor against us. In New York they defeated

us handily in December, 124-92, with this style of attack, spurred on by Mark Jackson. We've played very well against them since, both in Boston (where we won all three games) and in our other game in New York, when we rallied from 9 down in the 4th quarter to defeat them, 115-110. Patrick Ewing has been immense for them all season, and in that game, he played beyond that, scoring 51 points.

That game highlighted the change the Knicks went through after they traded Rod Strickland to San Antonio for Maurice Cheeks. More than ever, the Knicks looked to Patrick for their offensive thrust; in losing Charles Oakley to injury, they also probably felt impelled to go to Patrick more to establish their inside game. One of the adjustments they've made is that they began putting back their halfcourt press late in the season. They brought Johnny Neumann in against us in April to play the off-guard, for example. They have Oakley back now, and they have some fine support players in Gerald Wilkins and Kenny Walker.

You find as you proceed in the playoffs that there is a fine line — you must scout your opponent, and at this time of the year, it's more important because of the additional time you have to focus in — on films, through scouting reports. But as I said before, we have progressed very well the last month of the season. We feel that if we're playing our game, (and in the week leading up to the first game against the Knicks last Thursday, we had some of our best practices), we'll be all right, regardless of who we play. Obviously against the Knicks, the onus is probably more on Robert Parish than anyone else, because of Patrick's power in the paint. We'll do a few different things, probably double quicker in some instances. But you don't want to be too clever: In our final contest against the Knicks in Boston, as a result of our emphasis on Patrick, Cheeks shot 10 for 11. We know how they have gone to the press against us and how they have pushed the ball up on us at every opportunity. But Reggie Lewis hurt them too with baskets and offensive rebounds in the transition game. And I'm confident in our defense now; we've played a whole year relatively injury free. We've learned to cover for each other much better on defense as the year went on.

There's no question that playoff time is different. Everything is magnified, and the intensity level is greater, probably because there are fewer back-to-back games and the players are more rested. But what we've attempted to do is to come into the postseason on a high, and I think we've achieved this. We're confident in our game, whether the opponent is New York, or the winner of the subsequent Detroit-Indiana series, and so on.

You do not, under any set of circumstances, look beyond any opponent, or even one game now. But as a coach, I'm thinking positive. I think this basketball team is a very good one right now. We're looking for tendencies of our opponents, whether it's Maurice Cheeks of New York, or Isiah Thomas of Detroit (and what they do to get their respective teams into gear). But if we continue to play that good fundamental ball I spoke of earlier, paying attention to our game and playing it well, I'm confident we'll continue to play well. We have been helped by establishing mainly an eight man rotation; but we're a twelve man team. Any one of the guys on our roster can contribute now. Every player on our team, at one time or another during the season, has been in the top seven in the rotation.

CELTICS PRIDE

First Round Playoff Summaries

Playoff Game One: Boston 116, New York 105, April 28 @ Boston Garden. The Celtics opened up a tight contest in the 3rd quarter to take a 1-0 advantage in the opening round of the playoffs. Larry Bird paced the scoring, which had all of the Celts' starters in double figures. Bird scored 24 points to top off a triple double: 24 points, 18 rebounds and 10 assists. The C's led early as Robert Parish (18 pts., 10 rebs.,) paced a 24-16 lead at the 3:51 mark. But New York closed strong and led 30-28 at the quarter. Paced by Johnny Newman's 10 points and the three point shooting of Trent Tucker, New York would lead by 53-46 before Dennis Johnson sparked a rally to close the gap to 59-57 at halftime.

Johnson, Reggie Lewis and Larry Bird spearheaded the C's rush in the third quarter. Trailing 64-63, Boston extended their defense and ran off a 21-11 streak. Bird's 3-point field goal gave the C's an 84-75 lead at the 2:36 mark of the period.

The Knicks, who were led in scoring by Patrick Ewing with 22 points, would never threaten in the final stanza, shooting only 8-22 from the floor. A Ewing tip closed the margin to 96-90 at the 7:10 mark, but Kevin McHale (21 pts., 9 rebs.) and Reggie Lewis scored 4 points each to again extend the lead to 12, 104-92.

Playoff Game Two: Boston 157, New York 128, April 28 @ Boston Garden. The Celtics turned in a record-smashing performance in routing the Knicks in Boston, giving them a 2-0 lead in the best-of-five set. The 157-128 win set a record for most points in one game by one team, highest shooting percentage (67%), and a tie for most points by two teams. The Celtics also

broke eight team records.

Boston led after the first quarter 41-38, scoring on their first 10 possessions of the game. New York would make its run in the opening stanza after Robert Parish (18 pts., 16 rebs.) went to the bench for a rest at the 3:51 mark. The Knicks closed the gap after trailing by 25-15 earlier.

Two critical runs sealed the verdict, opening the 2nd and 3rd quarter. A 16-3 rush gave the C's a 57-42 lead, paced by Jim Paxson and Reggie Lewis (11 and 21 pts. respectively). The spurt would help pave the way to a 74-59 halftime lead. Intermittent gave little relief to New York: The C's shot an unprecedented 17-of-21 from the floor in the third quarter and the C's scored 42 points for the period, leading 116-93. Later, Jimmy Rodgers would play the entire bench, and the incredible scoring display continued. Kevin McHale led the scoring with 31 and Larry Bird had 16 assists. Patrick Ewing had 28 points for the Knicks and Gerald Wilkins 24. An example of the C's proficiency: McHale shot 13-15 from the floor and he was replaced by Ed Pinckney, who shot 6-for-6.

"We had it all going," commented Bird. "But we've been in situations where we've won games like that and then lost the next one. It's just one game."

"I'm always wary," said Jimmy Rodgers afterward. "But the truth is, we've been playing very well the past several weeks. We've won 18 of 22 coming down the stretch, and one of the key reasons is we've been shooting the ball so well. There isn't any hiding it. Today we played a very, very good game. I'm very proud of our guys."

GAME 1 CELTICS, 116-105

at Boston Garden												
NEW YORK												
	Min.	FG	FT	Reb.	A	F	Pts.		Min.	FG	FT	Reb.
Walker	23	3-5	1-4	1-2	1	4	7					
Vandeweghe	34	5-14	0-0	1-4	1	2	10					
Ewing	42	9-14	4-10	3-9	1	5	22					
Cheeks	33	4-10	3-4	1-3	9	3	11					
G. Wilkins	24	5-12	3-3	1-5	5	4	14					
Tucker	23	4-9	0-0	1-1	4	0	10					
Newman	23	7-8	6-7	1-3	2	6	21					
Oakley	16	2-5	3-5	1-2	0	2	8					
E. Wilkins	7	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Jackson	15	0-2	2-2	0-1	4	0	2					
Totals	240	39-90	22-35	10-30	27	26	105					

FG%: 48%; FT%: 62%; Three-point goals: 5-11, 455 (Tucker 2-5, G. Wilkins 1-1, Newman 1-1, Oakley 1-1, Walker 0-1, Vandeweghe 0-1, Cheeks 0-1); Team rebounds: 13; Blocked: 4 (Ewing 2, Walker, Oakley); Turnovers: 14 (Ewing 4, Cheeks 3, G. Wilkins 2, Jackson 2, Tucker, Newman, E. Wilkins); Steals: 7 (Cheeks 3, Ewing, Oakley, Tucker, Newman); Technical fouls: None; Illegal defense: 1.

BOSTON												
	Min.	FG	FT	Reb.	A	F	Pts.		Min.	FG	FT	Reb.
McHale	36	9-14	3-4	3-9	3	4	21					
Bird	40	10-19	2-2	3-18	10	1	24					
Parish	38	7-13	4-4	4-10	2	5	18					
Johnson	31	5-12	4-4	0-2	6	14	14					
Lewis	44	7-13	8-8	1-2	5	1	22					
Bagley	17	2-2	1-1	0-0	5	3	5					
Paxson	13	1-3	0-0	0-0	1	0	2					
Kleine	14	3-3	0-0	1-2	0	2	6					
Pinckney	3	0-0	2-2	0-0	0	0	2					
M. Smith	2	0-0	2-2	0-0	0	0	2					
C. Smith	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Gamble	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Totals	240	44-79	26-27	12-43	32	22	116					

FG%: 57%; FT%: 96%; Three-point goals: 2-6, 333 (Bird 2-5, Paxson 0-1); Team rebounds: 4; Blocked: 4 (Johnson 2, McHale, Lewis); Turnovers: 15 (McHale 5, Bird 4, Lewis 2, Bagley 2, Parish, Johnson); Steals: 8 (Lewis 3, Bird, Parish, Johnson, Klein, Paxson); Technical fouls: None; Illegal defense: None.

New York	30	29	21	25	-105
Boston	28	29	31	28	-116

A — 14,890; T — 2:14
Officials — Jack Madden, Jess Kersey, Lee Jones.

GAME 2 CELTICS, 157-128

at Boston Garden												
NEW YORK												
	Min.	FG	FT	Reb.	A	F	Pts.		Min.	FG	FT	Reb.
Walker	14	0-1	2-2	1-4	0	4	2					
Vandeweghe	26	6-11	1-2	1-2	2	2	13					
Ewing	40	11-18	6-6	3-8	3	5	28					
Cheeks	37	2-8	2-2	1-1	5	2	6					
G. Wilkins	30	10-20	4-4	2-4	7	3	24					
Oakley	21	4-10	3-6	5-9	0	0	11					
Newman	27	8-16	4-6	1-1	2	4	21					
Tucker	20	3-6	0-0	2-2	2	4	8					
Jackson	11	5-8	1-1	0-0	4	1	11					
McHale	44	6-13	5-6	0-0	2	5	17					
E. Wilkins	7	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Quinnitt	4	1-1	0-0	1-1	0	0	2					
Gray	3	1-1	0-0	0-3	0	0	2					
Totals	240	55-100	23-29	17-35	25	27	128					

FG%: 51%; FT%: 79%; Three-point goals: 3-11, 273 (Tucker 2-5, Newman 1-3, Vandeweghe 0-1, G. Wilkins 0-1, Jackson 0-1); Team rebounds: 8; Blocked: 1 (Ewing); Turnovers: 14 (Oakley 4, Ewing 2, Newman 2, Tucker 2, Vandeweghe, Jackson, Cheeks, Quinnitt); Steals: 9 (Cheeks 2, G. Wilkins 2, Vandeweghe, Oakley, Newman, Tucker, Jackson); Technical fouls: None; Illegal defense: None.

BOSTON												
	Min.	FG	FT	Reb.	A	F	Pts.		Min.	FG	FT	Reb.
McHale	28	12-15	7-7	2-10	4	3	31					
Bird	37	5-15	5-6	0-3	1-6	1	15					
Parish	26	6-11	6-6	8-16	3	4	18					
Johnson	26	5-7	1-1	0-0	4	1	12					
Lewis	31	9-13	3-3	2-6	4	4	21					
Paxson	19	4-6	3-3	0-0	5	0	11					
Bagley	18	5-7	0-1	0-0	4	3	10					
Kleine	23	4-4	0-0	0-3	1	2	8					
M. Smith	7	4-5	1-1	0-0	0	0	9					
Pinckney	14	6-6	4-5	2-4	0	1	16					
Gamble	5	2-4	0-0	0-0	2	1	4					
C. Smith	4	1-1	0-0	0-0	3	0	2					
Totals	240	63-94	30-33	14-42	46	20	157					

FG%: 67%; FT%: 90%; Three-point goals: 1-6, 167 (Johnson 1-1, McHale 0-1, Bird 0-1); Team rebounds: 4; Blocked: 7 (McHale 2, Bird 2, Parish 2, Klein); Turnovers: 12 (Johnson 2, Klein 2, Paxson 2, Bird, Lewis, Bagley, M. Smith, Pinckney, Gamble); Steals: 7 (Paxson 3, Bagley, Bird, Lewis, C. Smith); Technical fouls: None; Illegal defense: 1.

New York	38	21	34	35	-128
Boston	41	33	28	41	-157

A — 14,890; T — 2:11
Officials — Earl Strom, Paul Mihalak, Tommy Nunez.

All of the Celtics scored, and the team shot 63-94 from the floor and 30-33 from the Free Throw line. The C's starters combined for 97 points in only 150 playing minutes, out of a possible 240. Pinckney scored 16 points in 14 minutes. The C's broke Milwaukee's former record with the Bucks, scoring 156 points against the Philadelphia 76ers in 1970, paced by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, then a rookie.

Playoff Game Three: New York 102, Boston 99, May 2 @ Madison Square Garden. Kenny Walker drilled an open jumper from the right baseline on a Maurice Cheeks' feed off the penetration with 7.6 seconds remaining to clinch the win for the Knicks. Walker's basket effectively nullified a last minute drive by the Celtics to clinch the series. Boston had rallied from a seven point deficit on the clutch shooting of Dennis Johnson, who finished with 18 points. After the Celtics had closed within 100-98, Johnson missed yet another jumper from the point which would have secured a tie. But Reggie Lewis knifed in between Patrick Ewing and Walker to grab the offensive rebound. His put-back was missed but he drew a foul. However, Lewis missed the front end of the two shot foul, setting up the Knicks' final possession, which culminated in Walker's shot.

A final Celtic field goal attempt for the tie, a three-point field goal try by Larry Bird, rattled off to the right, sealing the Knicks' victory.

Patrick Ewing, obviously the focus of the Knicks' offensive gameplan in Game Three starred for New York, registering a game high 31 points and 19 rebounds. Bird led the Celtic scoring also with 31 points.

Playoff Game Four: New York 135, Boston 108, May 4 @ Madison Square Garden. The Celtics were nothing but target

GAME 3 KNICKS, 102-99

at Madison Square Garden												
BOSTON												
	Min.	FG	FT	Reb.	A	F	Pts.		Min.	FG	FT	Reb.
Bird	45	12-25	6-7	0-8	8	4	31					
McHale	44	6-13	5-6	0-0	2	5	17					
Parish	32	4-7	3-4	4-10	4	5	11					
Johnson	39	8-14	2-2	0-2	2	1	18					
C. Smith	44	5-11	6-7	1-8	2	3	16					
Lewis	16	2-2	0-0	0-6	0	4	4					
Bagley	9	0-1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0					
Paxson	11	1-1	0-1	0-0	1	0	2					
Totals	240	38-74	22-27	5-43	20	23	99					

FG%: 51%; FT%: 81%; Three-point goals: 1-7, 143 (Bird 1-4, Bagley 0-1, Johnson 0-2); Team rebounds: 9; Blocked: 9 (Bird 2, McHale 2, Parish 2, Lewis, Klein, Bagley); Turnovers: 21 (Bird 5, McHale 5, Parish 5, Johnson 2, Lewis 2, Bagley 2); Steals: 5 (McHale 2, Parish 2, Bird); Technical fouls: Klein; Illegal defense: 1.

NEW YORK								
	Min.	FG	FT	Reb.	A	F	Pts.	
Oakley	38	5-9	4-7	6-13	5	6	14	
Vandeweghe	20	2-6	0-0	0-0	1	0	4	
Ewing	40	14-34	5-10	5-19	1	5	33	
Cheeks	45	5-12	2-2	1-5	11	2	12	
G. Wilkins	42	6-19	3-6	5-8	1	15	15	
Newman	26	3-12	5-5	2-3	1	5	11	
Tucker	6	1-3	0-0	0-1	0	1	2	
Walker	14	4-5	1-2	2-4	0	1	9	
Jackson	3	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	

Veteran Bird Still Brilliant

Larry And The C's Are Back In Fine Form

By Bob Schron

It's May, and the Celtics are again where they belong. Since Larry Bird appeared on the scene in Boston in 1979 — young, long blonde hair, reluctant to talk much, but undeniably smart and always the brilliant talent — the Celtics have marched through playoff season after playoff season. Since Bird's first season in Boston, a Rookie of the Year season by the way, the Celtics have won three NBA titles, made it to The Finals two other times, and have played in the final four of the NBA two other times, losing in the Eastern Conference twice. In seven of the ten years, the Celtics have rightfully called themselves one of the best teams in the game.

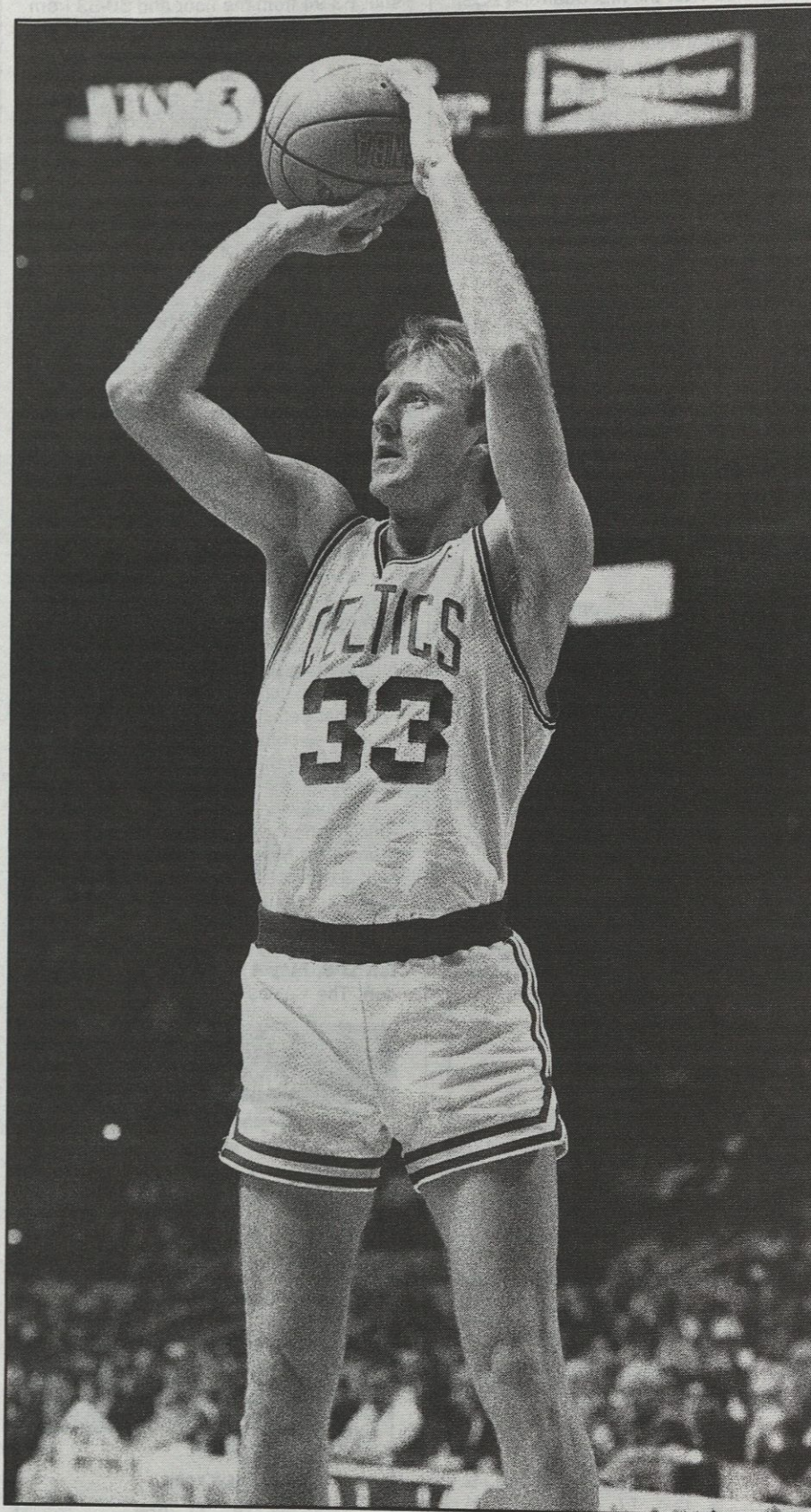
Larry Bird was asked at midseason how far he thought the present edition of the Celtics, more veteran-oriented than ever before, could go this year. "I think we'll be all right. We've played much better on the road this season (22 wins), and to me, that's always been an indication of how well a team is playing.

"Physical talent is all over this league. But you have to be mentally tough to win on the road, and we've shown signs of having the ability to win in tough situations.

"We've set goals, and to my mind, we should be thinking championship. There's no other reason to play unless you're going all out for the title."

In the middle of February, such a notion might have been regarded as ludicrous. Boston, in the middle of what many labeled a "death march" West Coast road trip, had lost four straight games. Yet, at that point in the season, the Celtics' season began changing. Bird played a major role at that time; finally regaining his form and his rhythm after his injury-enforced absence in 1988-89 to recuperate from delicate heel surgery, Bird led a scrambling team effort in wins in Oakland and Denver, and the Celtics started giving chase for the title Bird annually plays for.

Bird's game, always judged by the highest of standards, measured up again in 1989-90, though never before was it as closely scrutinized. He averaged 24.3 ppg with 9.5 rebounds and 7.5 assists. He was named to the 1st team in the East-West All-Star game, and over the course of the year, registered 10 triple-doubles. He had his fourth career 50-point game this season, handed out 16 assists against Cleveland in March, and tied his career best in blocked shots in a game with 5 against Detroit, March 30th. Bird also set a Celtic record for free throw shooting this season. With these superlative numbers this season, a year in which the Celtics won 52 games and pressed Philadelphia throughout the year for Atlantic Division honors, Bird nevertheless struggled early. Many thought he tried to do too much too soon, i.e., tried to be the player who many also think is the best in the game, overnight. "I think that's true," said Coach Jimmy Rodgers at practice last week during the playoff series against New York. "But Larry's had a tremendous season. I said from the outset of the season that I was just thrilled to have him back in the lineup. He makes our team so much better. His shooting. His rebounding. And the way he moves the ball. He's



Larry Bird: "It's more of a mental test for me now."

the only forward listed among the league leaders in assists, for example." To verify Rodgers' judgment, Bird went out and immediately turned in another triple double in the 1990 playoff opener: against New York, Bird scored 24 points with 18 rebounds and 10 assists in the Celtics' 116-105 verdict over New York.

After that game, New York head coach Stu Jackson was leaving the Garden with assistant coach Paul Silas. Both marveled over Bird's game — his thinking game. "Larry Bird had 24 points," commented Jackson. "But they were the most efficient

24 points you could ever imagine. If they need a rally-killer, Bird hits the jumper. A basket inside after that, to establish their inside game. And then the three point field goal, to 'break our backs'.

"But it's not only the scoring," added Silas. "He is just so far out ahead in knowing what needs to be done to win a game. Larry's always looking to set up guys for the pass. Set up his defender for the pick and roll with Robert Parish...the way he plays with Dennis Johnson. All of the veterans they have. The experience and the desire to win make them very tough to

beat."

Another judge of talent in the league is the controversial columnist, Peter Vecsey of The New York Post. Vecsey had written a column earlier this year which criticized both Bird and the Celtics, but last week in The Hub, Vecsey clarified his thoughts. "I didn't think Larry was playing at his past level. But that was December. He's had a full year back, and he is back. I don't think there's been any dropoff; oh, there might be some physical things he can't do, but they are minor. I've always admired Larry's game. The will to win. Magic Johnson has that same instinct, probably Michael Jordan. But there aren't others who belong in that class. Larry is back at the level of superstardom."

Bird left practice last week as the Celtics prepared for the initial stages of the playoffs. He has recently again begun talking to the media, after having refused interviews after games at the Garden for approximately two months. Earlier he had acknowledged that he didn't realize how much more upper leg strength he would need to resume playing NBA level ball night in and night out. But apparently this too has been taken care of — as reflected by his outstanding rebounding in the playoffs. Bird's concerns, as he talked to the press that rainy afternoon, were in staying mentally prepared to play winning basketball in the postseason.

"The most important quality I look at now is that we are playing good fundamental basketball. It doesn't matter who you play, but how you're going about your business.

"I know one thing. I'm very excited about playing again. The season started slow, but things have been better of late. My main problem now is to get my game in order and help us to win.

"Things do change as you get older. The west coast trips become longer, it seems. So does the regular season. It's more of a mental test for me now (than it once was). That's why I like the playoffs. You have more time to prepare. You have some time to rest between games. There's more time to pay attention to details. You have time to enjoy the game again because it's played at its best level."

After the opening game win over the Knicks, Bird answered several questions in the group interview, a group which is becoming an assembly once again in Boston, as the Celtics regroup for another challenge for the championship. Late in the session, he was asked about the difference between playing in the postseason now, in contrast to his games in the early eighties against Philadelphia and Julius Erving.

Bird's eyes sought out a point in his memory, and he smiled as he recalled the wars past between the Hub and the Quaker City, a playoff series that might yet be renewed this playoff year.

"I remember those years — 1981, when we were behind three games to one and thought everything was lost. But then we won three straight and I remember thinking, 'Hey, we can beat these guys. Then the following year, when they beat us in the 7th Game, after we had again rallied from 1-3 in the set to tie it.

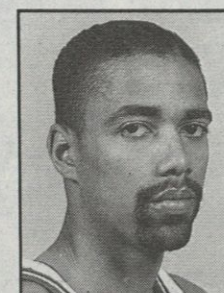
"You couldn't have a bad shooting night. Not at all. It was something. As good as the players are now, and good as the game is now, somehow, it's just not the same."

Perspective

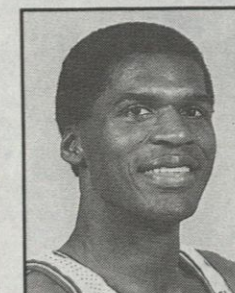
What do you do to relieve some of the stress at this time of year?

Every game in the NBA playoffs is invaluable. Every series a team plays in is a matter of survival, and it's a fact that the players live with daily. The game is played at a very elevated level in the playoffs, because of the time involved: There's more of it to prepare, to practice and to think of ways of defeating an opponent. The Celtics were asked what they do to relieve some of the stress at this time of year. The Celtics players and coaches were asked. A noticeable difference existed between the coaches and the players.

CHARLES SMITH. I try and stay involved during the game, for one thing. If I'm not getting much time, it's important for me to keep cheering on the bench. It keeps me pumped up. Off the court, I keep to the same routine. I listen to a lot of music, read music magazines, but, really, all types of magazines. Spend some time with friends. Try to keep to a normal schedule.

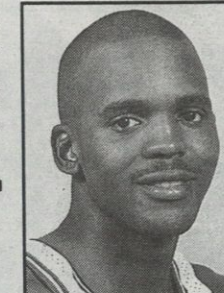


Charles Smith

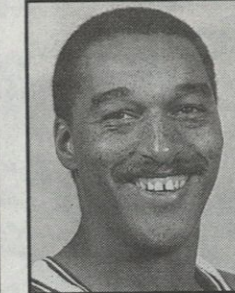


Robert Parish

KEVIN GAMBLE. I'm still brand new to this type of situation. But I'll do the same things I do during the regular season. For me, it's been tough lately because I haven't been getting as much playing time. So I've worked out more in practice and after (practice). Off the floor, I'll watch a lot of television. And something a lot of the players do: play Nintendo.

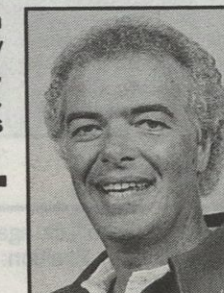


Kevin Gamble

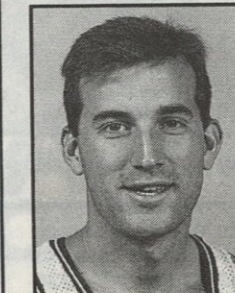


Dennis Johnson

JIMMY RODGERS. I try to get as much rest as I can. But I've been watching a lot of film. For example, when we have, say, one day between games, I'll watch the film of the previous game twice, once by myself and again with the assistant coaches and the team. But I try not to think about the games all the time. But I know it's there.

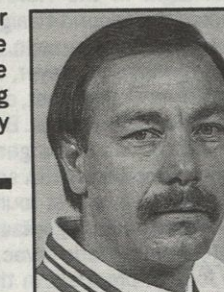


Jimmy Rodgers



Mike Smith

CHRIS FORD. Get away from the pressure of the playoffs? Time for rest? I have four children! Getting away from the pressure of the playoff games is something different for me, I suspect. I have baseball games, soccer leagues... (my son) Chris is still playing AAU (basketball). After the games are over here, I go back to family life.

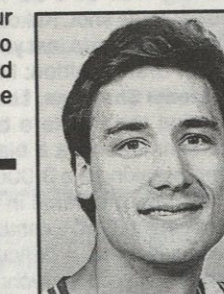


Chris Ford

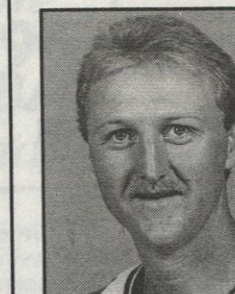


Lanny Van Eman

JIM PAXSON. I think it's important as a role player to take your mind off the game totally when you leave the gym. Because so much of the game for a role player is mental. I'll try and relax, and play some golf—at least hit some golf balls. But when I'm at the arena, it's total concentration.



Jim Paxson



Larry Bird

ROBERT PARISH. Listen to a lot of music. Jazz, such as George Howard, Quincy Jones, Najee. I'll leave practice, have a relaxing meal, and spend time reading (a recent book was about judo, White Knight. Parish studies judo). Once the games are over, I don't spend time thinking about them.

DENNIS JOHNSON. I think my routine has changed a great deal since when I was a young player. It's because I have a family now, so almost all of the time I have away from the game is spent working around my son's schedule. I'll play some pool...and I won't answer the telephone (because everybody will want to talk about the playoffs). I try not to think about the games too much. Play Nintendo, but I don't watch too much TV. I'll sleep more.

MIKE SMITH. I'm enjoying all of this, since it's my first season. But to relieve my stress—I'll get into my routines, more heavily. Like at the beginning of the playoffs, I hit buckets and buckets of golf balls for eight straight days.

LANNY VAN EMAN. Try to vary my routine. But once you get home, there's a whole other area of life that's very very important too. My wife and I go to a movie—we saw "Red October" last week, for example. I'll watch some of the other games on television and not all of them just to scout. But at this time of the year, like the rest of the season, I'm preoccupied with the games. I have a radio show at 8 am, and then I go to practice and there's more planning. That takes me through the day, so at this time of year, it probably becomes more intense.

LARRY BIRD. I think you think about the games more now—it's only logical. But this is the time of the year you should really enjoy as much as you can. Because the games are better, they're more challenging, and the teams in the playoffs are the best ones, playing their best. It should bring the best out of you. But I admit that it's hard, too. I'll just try and get away from it when I can, spend time with friends, rest, go out to dinner, enjoy the occasional days off because that does get you away from it.



1990 College Draft Preview

The Forwards

By Andy Roth

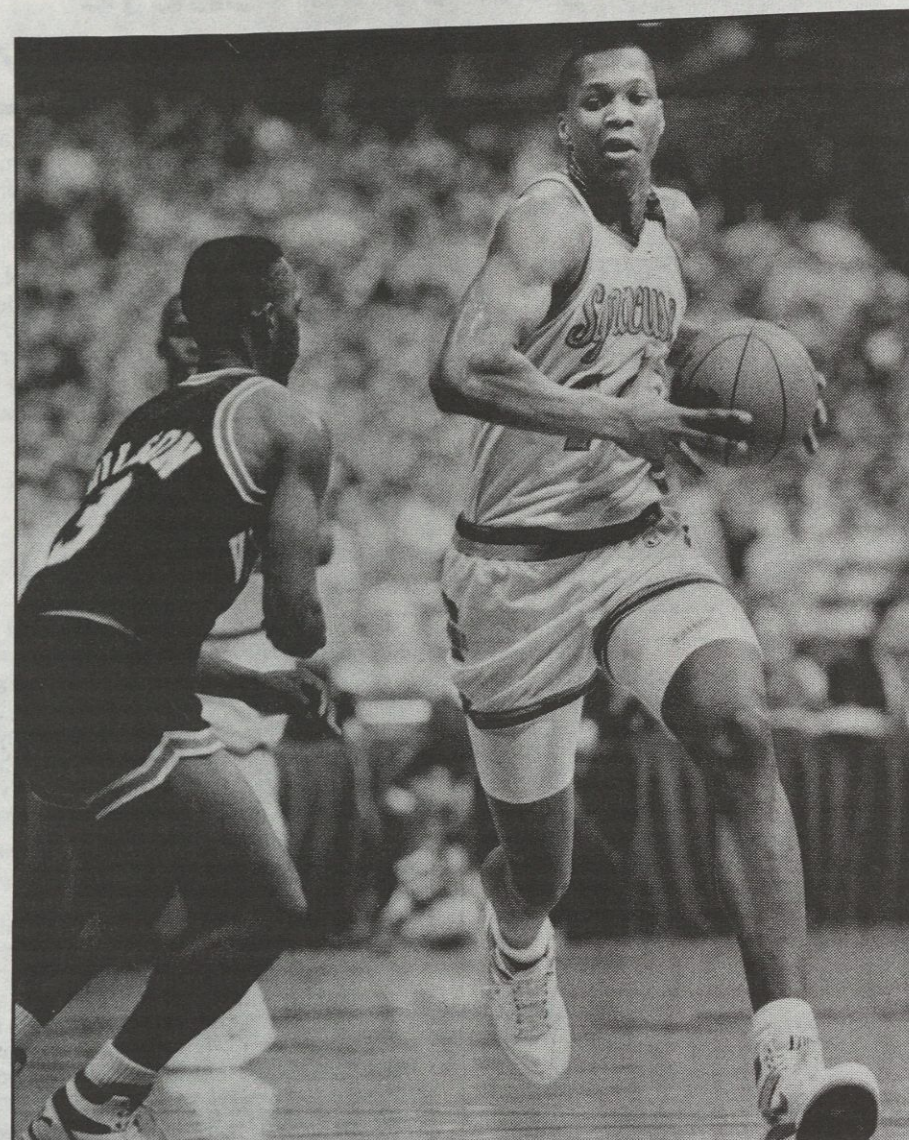
The following article reflects the opinions of an independent writer who writes for several publications and are in no way the views of the Boston Celtics or Celtics Pride.

POWER FORWARDS

1. Derrick Coleman, Syracuse. Like most Syracuse players, Coleman is a poor foul shooter. But that's where his weaknesses begin and end. At 6'9", 230 lbs., he has the ballhandling, passing, and shooting skills of a guard. Coleman is also very difficult to stop in the low post. Add solid rebounder to his credits, and you've got the number one pick in the draft.

2. Terry Mills, Michigan. His talent has never been at question, but his desire and focus has. Mills finally made an attempt to change that perception by dropping 30 pounds last summer. The hard work paid off as he averaged 18 points and 8 rebounds per game, and shot a blistering 59% from the floor. Mills also made a wise decision to stay in the low post more rather than posting up medium to long range jumpers. Draft Position: Lottery to mid first round pick.

3. Tyrone Hill, Xavier. "Let's Get Physical" should be Hill's theme song. He loves to throw his weight around the basket. Hill was the nation's second leading rebounder (12.5 rpg) as a junior, and is particularly tough off the offensive boards. He also runs the floor very well, has a nice



Derrick Coleman could be first pick.

liams would only have to look up to Derrick Coleman among the power forwards in this draft. He has very good size (6'10", 230 lbs.), and is an extremely effective scorer in the low post. Draft position: If Williams' foot checks out all right, he could go as high as mid-first round.

5. Alec Kessler, Georgia. Kessler has excelled on and off the court at Georgia. For the past three seasons he's been a first team academic All American Selection, A 6'11", 230 lbs., Kessler will also be able to play some center. He has an excellent touch for a player his size, and he can play inside, too. Kessler's one drawback is his lack of athletic ability. Translated in layman's terms: He's slow and he can't jump. This will present some problems on the defensive end in the NBA. Draft Position: Mid to late first round.

Best of the rest: David Butler, UNLV; Loy Vaught, Michigan; Nathan Buntin, Missouri; Scott Williams, North Carolina; Alan Abdeinaby, Duke.

SMALL FORWARDS

1. Gerald Glass, Mississippi. Think of a bulkier Adrian Dantley with more range, and you've got Gerald Glass. He was one of the most dominant offensive players in college basketball over the past two seasons. Glass' wide body makes him awfully tough to guard around the basket. His 6'6", 240 lb frame also gives him a big

edge on the boards against most small forwards. Draft Position: Mid to late first round pick.

2. Willie Burton, Minnesota. Burton was tremendous during the Gopher's run to the Final Eight in the NCAA Tournament. It marked the second straight year he played very big in post-season play. Burton is a superb offensive player. He can score effectively in the low post, off the dribble, and from three point range. Burton's penchant for playing well in big games should be a real eye-opener to NBA scouts. Draft Position: Mid to late first round.

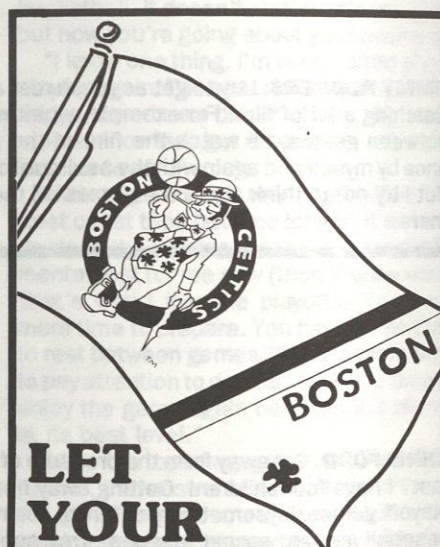
3. Toni Kukoc, Jugoplastika. Kukoc could be this year's Vlade Divac. He is clearly the top foreign prospect in the draft, and his skills are very similar to the Lakers' rookie. Kukoc runs the floor and handles the ball extremely well at 6'10". He also has a deadly outside shot. Kukoc excelled against NBA competition in last year's McDonald's Classic. Draft Position: Mid first round.

4. Lionel Simmons, LaSalle. The L-train could find the tracks a bit bumpy in the NBA. Simmons was a big time collegiate scorer, breaking the 3,000 point mark, but he may have problems in the next level. A lack of height (6'6"), combined with a slow release will make it difficult for him to get his shot off. Draft Position: Late first round.

Best of the Rest: Anthony Bonner, St. Louis; Trevor Wilson, UCLA; Cedric Ceballos, Fullerton State; Skeeter Henry, Oklahoma.



Gerald Glass: Adrian Dantley with more range.



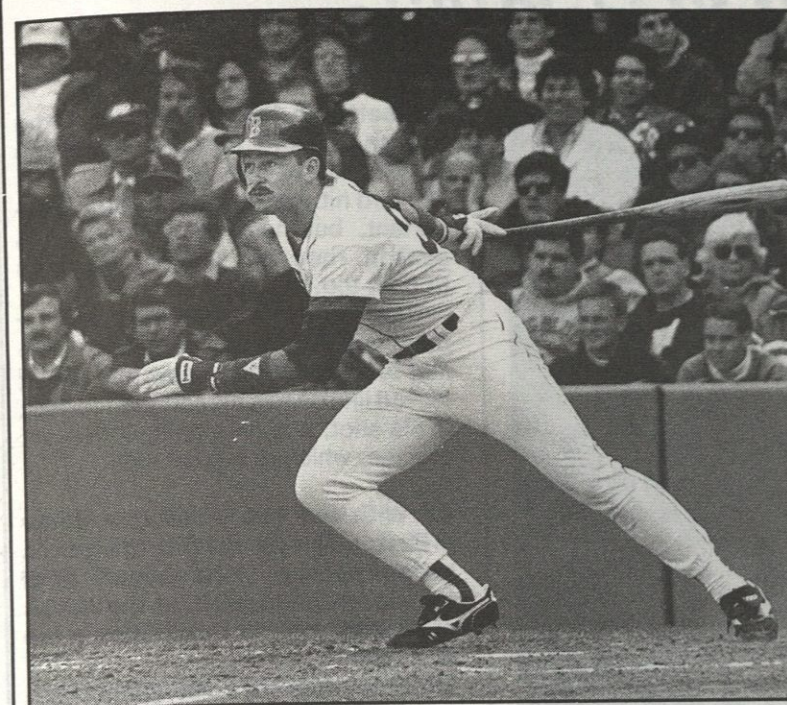
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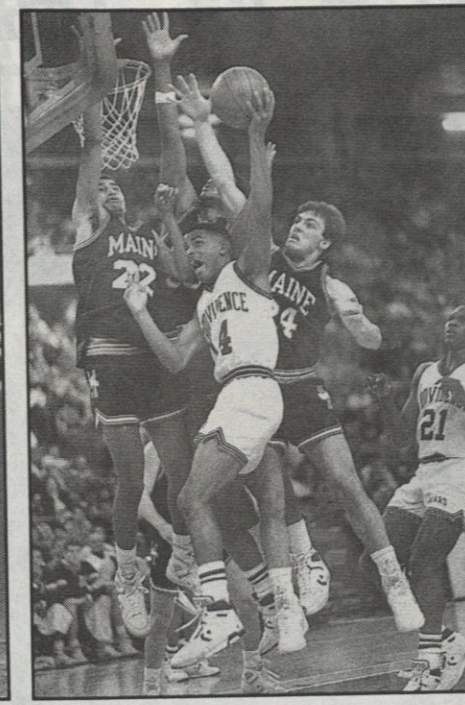
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Pictured above are the winning photographs from the Kodak/Celtics Pride Photo Contest. The third set of first, second and third place pictures belong to: 1st Place — Mike Connors of Acton, MA, 2nd Place — Rufus Abdullah of Pawtucket, RI, 3rd Place — Emilie Riss of Madison, NH.

Each of the first place finishers will be receiving a Kodak K-14 35mm camera and will also have the opportunity to photograph an upcoming Celtics game from courtside. In addition, they will be receiving a color photo enlargement of their favorite Celtics player and a complimentary year-long subscription to *Celtics Pride*.

Eastern Conference

First Round (best-of-5) Semifinals (best-of-7) Finals (best-of-7)

1 DETROIT

8 INDIANA

4 BOSTON

5 NEW YORK

2 PHILADELPHIA

7 CLEVELAND

3 CHICAGO

6 MILWAUKEE

DETROIT

CHICAGO

NBA
FINALS

(best-of-7)

The
1990
NBA
Finals

Western Conference

Finals (best-of-7) Semifinals (best-of-7) First Round (best-of-5)

LA LAKERS 1

LA LAKERS

HOUSTON 8

UTAH 4

PHOENIX 5

SAN ANTONIO 2

SAN ANTONIO

DENVER 7

PORTLAND 3

PORTLAND

DALLAS 6

Eight teams from each conference qualify for the NBA Playoffs. The division champion with the better record in each conference is ranked No. 1, the other division winner is ranked No. 2 and the remaining six teams are ranked Nos. 3-8 according to their won-lost records. In each round of the playoffs, the team with the better regular season won-lost record gets the homecourt advantage.

Man to Man

Tommy Heinsohn Knows This Year's Celtics

By Andy Murphy

With playoff time upon us, Celtics Pride thought it would be a good idea to find someone who knows the NBA playoffs inside and out, not to mention the Celtics.

Who better to discuss both subjects than Tommy Heinsohn?

In his nine-plus years as head coach from 1968-1977, Heinsohn coached the Celtics to at least the conference finals six times, winning NBA championships in 1974 and 1976.

Tommy knows playoffs.

And, being a color commentator for Sports Channel and CBS, he knows this year's Celtics.

Now, Celtics Pride spends some time with Tommy Heinsohn.



Heinsohn: "In the playoffs, you have to be able to play your style of basketball."

CELTICS PRIDE: Let's cut right to the bone. How far do you think the Celtics can go in the playoffs?

TOMMY HEINSOHN: The Celtics are a hard team to pinpoint. I think they could win it all or they could get knocked out in the first round. The reason why I think this is they haven't displayed any consistency until the tail end of the season, and even then it's suspect because they played some expansion teams, some teams in turmoil and some good teams who were without their really good players. So even though they won those games, it

ball better in the second half of the season, doesn't that give them the outside threat they need?

TH: Bird hitting the outside shot is important, but he's been erratic this season. They need one of the guards to do it too.

That's why to me the key player for them is going to be Jim Paxson. The last few games that I saw him play it looked like he has his confidence back in his shot, and he's doing it in a set offense, which is a good sign.

CP: With New York's history of futility in Boston Garden, and with the team's general collapse in the second half of the season, don't you think the Knicks are a good draw for the Celtics in the first round?

TH: The Knicks are a disorganized and potentially dispirited team. But I think the return of Charles Oakley might give them a shot in the arm.

The Knicks have been unable to win in Boston Garden, but they're also been a very tough team down in New York, so in a five game series the Celtics have to hold serve. Frankly, I don't think it's going to be as easy a series for the Celtics as everyone projects.

CP: But if they do get past the Knicks, then they're probably looking at a second round matchup with Detroit. Do you think the Pistons can be had?

TH: I don't think Detroit has played to their potential over the course of the season, and they don't have the people inside to defend against McHale and everybody.

Also, Detroit has not used their up tempo game effectively this year, and that's what you have to use against the Celtics. So I don't think anyone is conceding the East to the Pistons.

CP: Given that, who do you like in the playoffs this year?

TH: Personally, I think anybody can win the thing this year, and quite frankly the best team I saw all year long was the Portland Trail Blazers when they came out East and wiped everybody out.

But I think it's a year where anybody can win it. Look at Philadelphia, for instance. They have a helluva ballclub and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if they came out of the East.

I don't discount the Celtics, though. As I said, I think they could go anywhere from winning the whole thing to losing three straight in the first round. But what I'm trying to establish is that while they appear to be on an upswing going into the playoffs, it might be a little deceiving, and they might wind up playing in the playoffs the way they did through much of the regular season — erratically.

outside shot, except the guards, and they were considered a defensive team because it was so difficult to score against them. Their offense left them in perfect position to defend against the fast break.

Every other team that won the championship was a 50 to 60 per cent running team. Even the Celtics, when they were so successful in the 80's, had a running attack that they used about 50 per cent of the time.

But those Celtics teams had great outside shooting, and I don't think they have that any more. That's why I think their half court game is potentially suspect: they don't have the great outside shooting that is going to pull the defense off the good inside players.

To win the thing, I think the Celtics have to run. Their problem this year is they haven't been able to come up with a definitive style of play that they can inflict on everybody. But, they've been at their most effective all year when they run — it opens up the inside and they get easier shots.

CP: But with Larry Bird shooting the

wasn't truly in the heat of competition.

CP: A lot of analysts like the Celtics' chances because the playoffs tend to slow down into the half court game. What do you think about that?

TH: Somehow or other there's this myth that's been developed that says half court basketball wins championships. The truth of the matter, in my opinion, is that in the playoffs, you have to be able to play your style of basketball, whatever it may be.

I dare say that if you look back at all the champions over the years and you attach one descriptive sentence to the teams, with 95 per cent of them you'd say they were running teams.

The half court game is a myth that's forced upon teams by coaches who don't know how to teach the running game. People pontificate on how important the half court game is in the playoffs, but if you look back on all the past champions, the only team that I saw win the thing without a real running attack was the New York Knicks in the late 60's and early 70's.

They were a great half court team where everybody was able to hit the

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Boston's Playoff Rotation Is Bringing Out Their Best

The Eight Man Rotation Suits The Celts Just Fine

By Bob Schron

The insertion of Kevin McHale into the starting lineup on March 11th arguably produced the turning point of the season for the Boston Celtics. McHale, until that time, had been averaging 31 minutes a game. His final average minutes, nearly 34 per contest, reflected a notable jump in minutes played per game for the 6'11" All-Star forward.

"I don't think that much about starting," commented McHale last week in an interview. "What's turned the season around for us is that we are playing consistent basketball. We finally have been able to come up with defensive stops when we have to. This enables us to put teams away. Now we're in basically an eight man rotation, and that means something, especially when you get to the playoffs. There aren't usually a lot of minutes to go around (in the playoffs)."

The Celtics roared through the stretch in the regular season, winning eighteen of their last twenty-three and nine of their final ten. Interestingly, McHale was — and is — a proponent of Coach Jimmy Rodgers'

games, from March 4th through 9th. Included then was the team's most desultory performance, a 130-117 at the hands of fast-breaking Portland on March 7th.

The Celtics played their most proficient basketball beginning that day against Philadelphia. Joe Kleine won that contest with a buzzer beating jumper, 107-105, but after the game, after having played poorly, Charles Barkley remained defiant. "The Atlantic Division is between Philadelphia and the Knicks," he snapped to Boston writers. "Because of depth," he continued. But the Celtics supplanted New York in the chase for title honors in the Atlantic significantly because the five starters (McHale, Larry Bird, Robert Parish, Dennis Johnson and Reggie Lewis) received consistent backup play from Kleine, Jim Paxson (small forward and two guard) and John Bagley at the point behind Johnson. The starting lineup won twelve of their fifteen starts, besting the starting group of Paxson-Ed Pinckney-Parish-Bird and Johnson's 11-5 as the team's best starting group this season.

"I like to think we can go to any one of our players," Rodgers commented. "You have to remember, every one of our guys has been a starter or in the top seven at one time or another this season."

"And just as I'm not afraid to play any one of the guys at any time, even if we are in the playoffs, I'm not worried about extended minutes for any of the top five. We've spread the minutes around pretty effectively this season. Kevin and Larry may be playing long minutes now, and perhaps Robert as well. But we've saved time for them during the regular season."

Asked about being satisfied with his playing time behind Johnson, Bagley, an outstanding pressure player, commented, "It's worked out — but I think it has because the minutes are based on production. If you're doing the job, you play. And that's a system that works because it's fair."

Parish's productivity has remained high, even at this time of the year, as pointed out in *Celtics Pride* last month by *The Quincy Patriot-Ledger's* Mike Fine. "Robert's enthusiastic," Fine said in an interview, "because he has Kleine backing him up. And he isn't injured now because he's been rested."

Johnson points out that the team has achieved a balance because of the rotation. "There's enough people playing so that we are able to constantly put pressure on

teams. Whether it's in a controlled running game, halfcourt offense, or good solid defense." Johnson, once threatened by the presence of Bagley, has changed places now. He's an active supporter of the backup point guard, acquired by Boston from New Jersey last summer. And Paxson has contributed another interesting facet to the tale: he was the twelfth man on the bench during the team's West Coast trip in February, partly because of a series of nagging injuries. But in Portland, Rodgers went back to the veteran guard-forward and he turned in a pair of strong efforts against his former Trail Blazer team and the Lakers in



D.J.: "There's enough people playing so that we are able to constantly put pressure on teams."

Los Angeles two days later. Obtained from Portland two years ago and thought to be a key player for a championship drive then, he has resurfaced now, and is playing with textbook efficiency, although perhaps unable to play at all-star caliber, because of limited time.

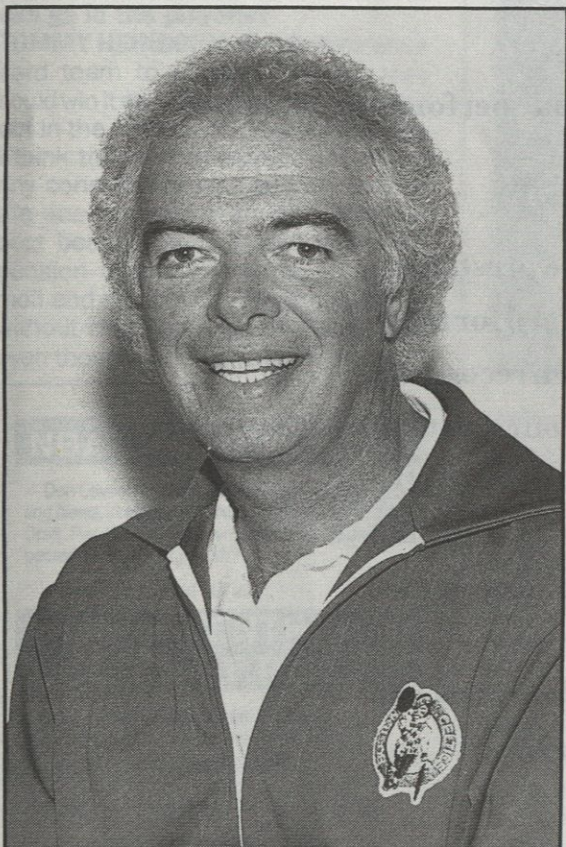
"The Celtics are tough," commented New York Knicks' assistant coach, Paul Silas. "They have Bird, McHale and Parish who opponents have to focus on. D.J.'s playing great now, and with Reggie Lewis as good as he's become, they have that starting lineup that knocks you back, like when Danny Ainge was with them. There's a definite confidence factor, and this makes it easier for the bench to come in and contribute. It's always easier to play when you're ahead and have the jump on people. The bench doesn't have to worry about turning in big numbers. They can just play."

This is of critical importance of course if the Celtics proceed on to play the defending champion Pistons in the next round of the playoffs, as expected. For two years, the Pistons have dominated the playoff competition between the two teams, utiliz-

ing a claustrophobic defense on Bird, and an intimidating low post attack. This year, the Pistons are different; in place of Rick Mahorn, Detroit is imposing because of their determined offense in the guises of James Edwards down low and Mark Aguirre on the wing. Joe Dumars, Isiah Thomas and Vinnie Johnson remain bonafide superstar threats in the backcourt, and however difficult to cope with, Bill Laimbeer is a very good NBA player in the post. This doesn't even account for Dennis Rodman, best defender in the NBA.

The series, should it come off, would pose an intriguing look. For many think this could be the last chance for the present great Celtic nucleus to win a championship. Detroit, with an intricate defensive scheme, based on the work of Rodman, plays teams' offenses to force them to their weakest shooters, from their least proficient spot on the floor.

"At this time of the year," says Johnson of the Celtics, "it doesn't matter who you're playing. You just have to keep raising your game another level, when you progress through each round. Keep going! Keep going!"



Rodgers: "I like to think we can go to any one of our players."

belief that the Celtics are most effective playing as many men as is required. Rodgers has insisted, even now, that "the Celtics are in an eight man rotation, but we are a twelve man team." When Rodgers chose to start McHale against Philadelphia at home, March 11th, the decision was yet another response to a season of changing needs.

- Ed Pinckney had started first, because of defensive needs,
- Michael Smith keyed two vital wins out west, with offense,
- Finally, McHale started because Boston had dropped three consecutive home



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The All-Bird Trivia Test

1. Name the (5) players drafted before Larry in the 1978 draft.
2. In what year was he named the AP Male-Athlete-of-the-Year and the Sporting News Man of the Year?
3. What is Bird's highest scoring game ever at the Garden?
4. Which high school did he attend?
5. Who wore #33 just prior to Bird?
6. In what year did Bird win the MVP for the All-Star game?
7. During which season did Bird win his first NBA Championship, and which teams did the Celtics win during the playoffs?
8. During the 1980-81 season, Bird was among the league leaders in rebounds. What number was he, and what was his average?
9. How many seasons has Larry had the highest free-throw percentage?
10. How many times has Larry been named Edge NBA Most Valuable Player?
11. What is Bird's shoe size?
12. Against which team did Larry score his career high of 60?
13. Who are the two Celtics greats who have more career assists than Bird?
14. Who was the only NBA player to score more points than Bird (avg. 28.7) during the 1984-85 season?
15. How many times has Bird been named to the NBA All-Defensive team?

ANSWERS: 1. (M)chal Thompson, Phil Ford, Rick Robey, Michael Ray Richardson, Purvis Shortt, 2. (1986) 3. (53 vs. Indiana, 1983) 4. (Springs Valley, French Lick, IN) 5. (Ben Clyde, 74-75) 6. (1982) 7. (1980-81, Chicago, Philadelphia, Houston) 8. (4th, 10.9) 9. (4) 10. (3) 11. (83-84, 84-85, 85-86 seasons) 12. (13 1/2) 13. (Atlanta, 3/12/85) 14. (13 1/2) 15. (3) 16. (81-82, 82-83, 83-84 seasons — second team each time)



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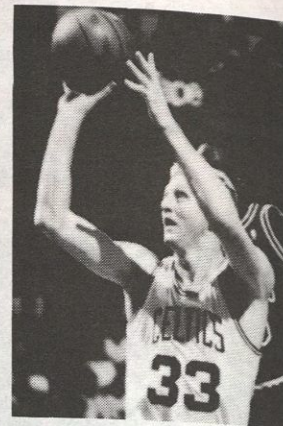
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Innerview

The Return Of The McHale Intimidation Factor

Celtic superstar power forward Kevin McHale has emerged as a spokesman for the team this season, impromptu as this might be. McHale averaged 20.8 ppg, including a 27.9 ppg tear late in March after he had fully settled in as a starter (He had come off the bench for the first two-thirds of the year). He averaged 33 minutes a game this season, but nevertheless had his best rebounding season since the 1986-87 year, when, as a starter, he averaged 40 minutes a contest. In addition, McHale's intimidation factor has returned this season: His 148 blocks represented the fourth highest total of his ten year career. McHale talked about the Celtics' and his own career on the eve of the Celtics playoff opener against the New York Knicks.

CELTIC PRIDE: Are there any key factors to look for as the Celtics open the playoffs?

KEVIN MCHALE: I think it's very important for our team to get off to a good start. Everybody tries to get the upper hand in the post season. I think it's important to get the first game of every series.

CP: In particular, against the Knicks?

KM: Well, that one was important because of two reasons. First, it was the beginning of the playoff season, and again, you want to establish something. The second reason is that we closed out the regular season playing our best basketball of the season. I think it was important for us to solidify our position by maintaining this level of play.

CP: You seem to make it a point this season to respond openly to interviews.

KM: Why not? I regard it as part of the job, and the media have their job to do as well, so I'll go out (after games) and talk to them. To you, I don't mind it—as much as I don't mind most things this time of year.

CP: Meaning?

KM: The playoffs are a time you try to concentrate harder on the game itself. The end is in sight: if you have a pretty solid shot at it (the title), then you're closing in on the goal.

CP: How would you assess the team now? Throughout the course of the season, you were pretty critical.

KM: We played our best basketball of the season in the last six weeks of the season. I think we finally set up a rotation in which everybody pretty much expected when they would play, or how long. I think Jimmy (Rodgers) followed through on his own plan for the season; a lot of guys played meaningful minutes at one time or another during the year. We had several different combinations, so we were able to get enough rest.

CP: But you were critical earlier of the team.

KM: We were too inconsistent. You'd never know what to expect. One game we were beating a team that was on a ten game winning streak (Phoenix in January). Then a week later we were getting beat by an expansion team (in Minnesota, February 2nd). But we put it together and we came

up with 52 wins. I'll take it.

CP: What were your expectations of the Knicks?

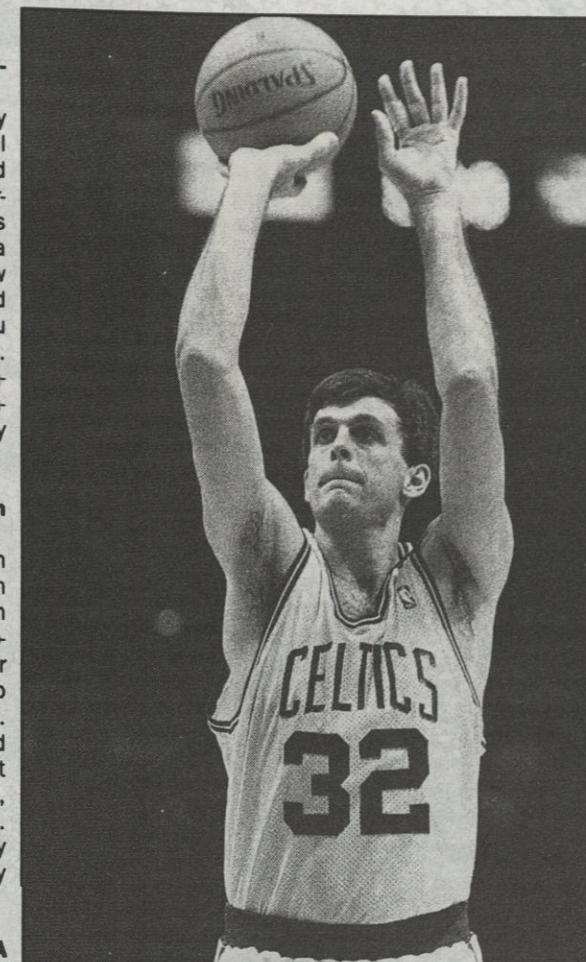
KM: I thought they would play well against us. They did all year, and even though we had success in the (Boston) Garden against them, the games were always close. They have a good team. I think the New York media is extremely hard to satisfy. Any mistake you make, and the media is tough. In order to have a good summer and feel good about themselves, the Knicks had to play well against us.

CP: The keys to success in the playoffs?

KM: I think a lot has to do with how disciplined you are on both ends of the court. Will you run the play out through its options? Against the Knicks, for example, we were going up against a tough pressing team. We had to both be patient and move the ball in a hurry. Wait for the press to come to you, and then hit the open man. Reggie Lewis was particularly potent against them, especially late in the season.

CP: You've appeared on PSA concerning the environment.

KM: I have. It was my intention early in my career to become involved in something important like cleaning up the environment, preventing pollution. Just to play some small part. I do not in any way think that basketball is the only profession on earth, although I still love playing it. But if I can lend my name to good causes through the recognition I've achieved through basketball, then all the better.



"We played our best basketball in the last six weeks of the season."

CP: You're also a hockey fan. Where did your love of hockey come from?

KM: Minnesota is hockey country. I grew up playing it, watching it, and I understand it thoroughly. I became a big fan of the Bruins, here, and I know them very well, consider them good friends. I'm extremely pleased they're having a great playoff. It's great to have your day in the sun.

CP: How much do you concern yourself with your opponents in the playoffs?

KM: I don't that much, and that may surprise you but it's true. Whether it's New York or Detroit or whoever, I look at our game and how well we're playing it. It doesn't matter who you play, you're playing yourselves. Are we concentrating? Are we playing smart? Are we taking advantages of situations on the floor? Are we playing hungry?

CP: And that obviously improved during the latter stages of the season.

KM: Defense. We picked it up defensively, and I also think that Larry (Bird) also got back and began playing the way he's accustomed to. In the beginning, he came back from his injury and he tried to do too much. But he relaxed and over the past six weeks of the season, he played great for us.

CP: How important is another championship for you?

KM: It's vital. Winning championships is something you absolutely play for. Winning one made me hungrier to win another, and the third (in 1986) made me want another one badly. I realized it more and more as the season went on, too. Which is why I was getting more and more excited as the playoffs got closer and we began getting our game together.

CP: Realistically then, what are the chances of another title?

KM: I said all along that I'd like to see us going into a streak of something like 9 or 10 wins in a row. Then let's see. Well, we accomplished that, and I have to say that I think we showed ourselves we can still play. We're not the team we were in 1986, because I don't think our bench is as strong as when we had Bill Walton, Jerry Sichting and Scott Wedman. But we've got our rotation in Synch—so yeah, I think we have a realistic chance. We just have to go out and play well.

CELTICS VIDEOS

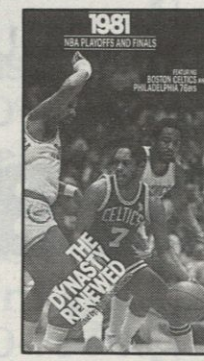
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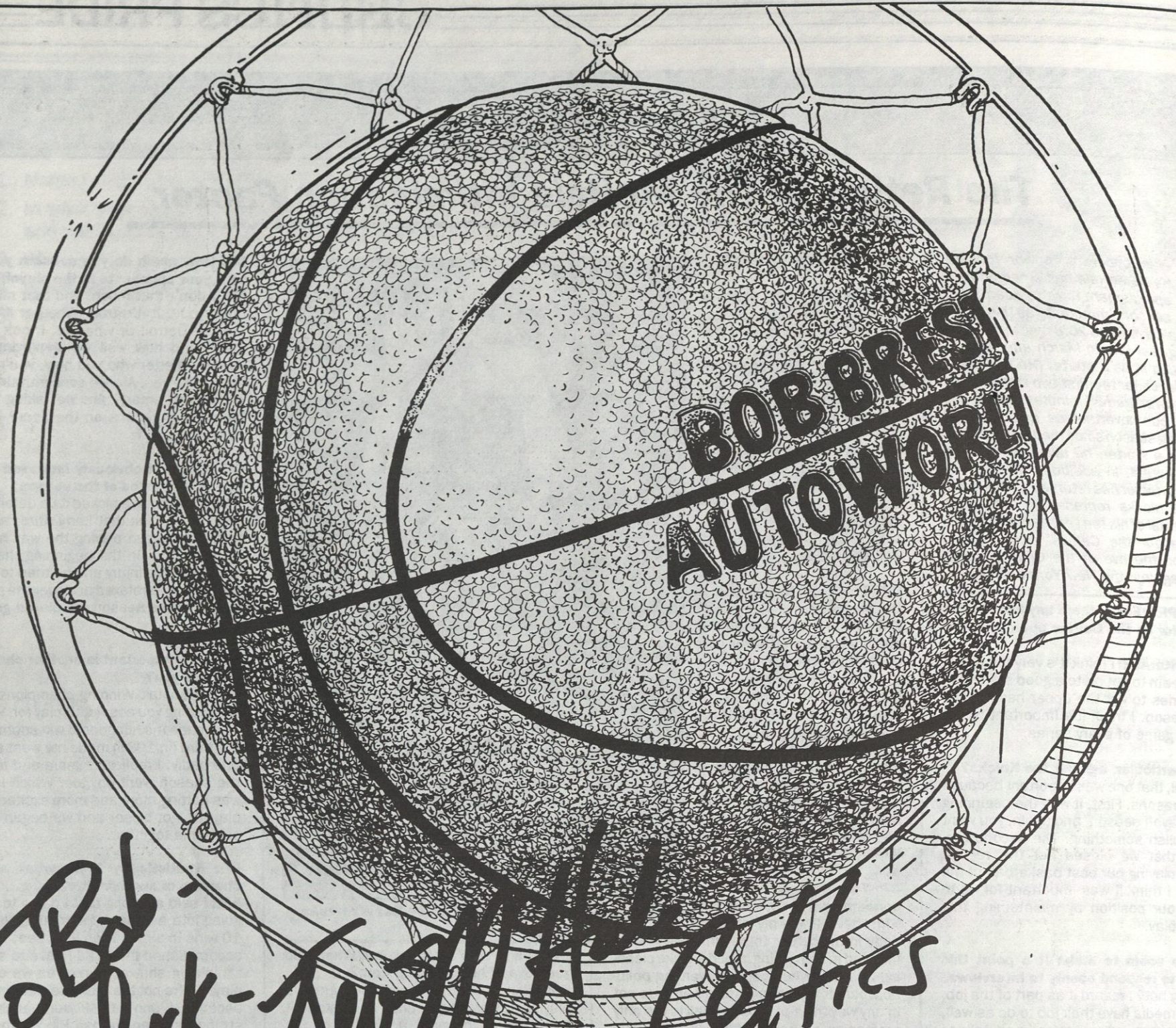
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CELTICS PRIDE

Game by Game Review

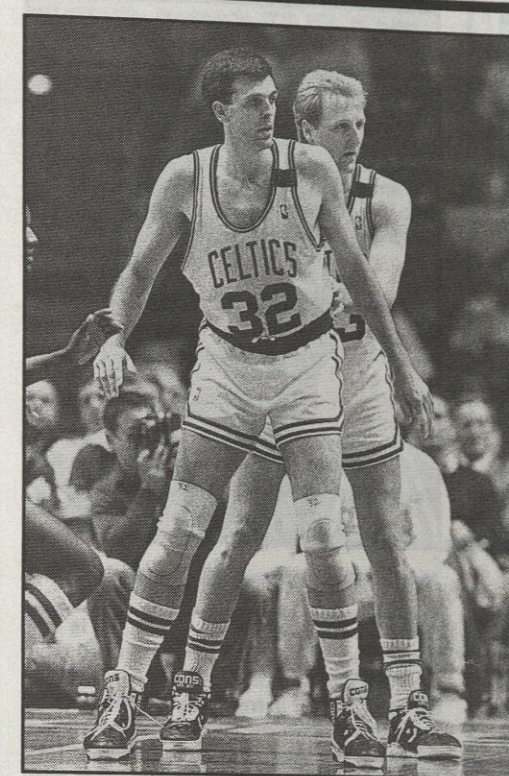
Celtics Close Regular Season Winning Nine Of Ten

The Celtics closed out the regular season playing their best basketball of the season. Despite losing both Larry Bird and Dennis Johnson to injuries the final week of the campaign, the Celtics played considerably better late. "We corrected some things, especially in our transition defense," commented Jimmy Rodgers. "We played better offensively, executed better. Plus we paid much better attention to detail, and matched up better in the open court."

Following is a list of highlights during the final week, and reports from the playoff openers in Boston last weekend.

Celtics Sweep Weekend Home Stand from Miami and New York, April 12-15th. Boston remained 1 1/2 games behind the Philadelphia 76ers in the race for the Atlantic Division title by defeating the Miami Heat and the New York Knicks. Boston won over the Heat, 139-118, in a surprisingly difficult game. The Celtics were paced by Larry Bird's 40 points. Boston had a thirteen point lead early in the third quarter, but the Heat, paced by Sherman Douglas's 37 points and 14 assists, shot 22-25 from the floor in a stirring 47 point 3rd quarter to take the lead. However, the Celtics stormed back as Bird connected on nine of ten from the floor down the stretch, and the C's responded with their own 47 point 4th quarter to win going away.

The Celtics then outlasted New York, 97-91, in what was a preview of the teams' opening round playoff series. Reggie Lewis paced the C's scoring with 34 and Larry Bird added a triple-double with 17 points, 17 rebounds and 13 assists. Patrick Ewing led the Knicks with 25 points, but it was veteran guard Maurice Cheeks who starred



Parish and the Celtics took charge down the stretch.

for New York, scoring 20 points and connecting on his first ten field goals. He would shoot 10 of 11 for the contest and rally New York from a 51-40 halftime deficit. New York fought back into the contest on the strength of their pressure defense, trapping the Celtics and forcing five turnovers in the 3rd quarter for 8 points. New York outscored Boston 33-18 in the 3rd

period to take a 73-69 lead into the final frame.

The starting quintet for Boston, however, took charge down the stretch. Robert Parish (25 points-14 rebounds-2 blocks) scored eight points in a three minute stretch late in the game, and Bird nailed the verdict with a key three-point FG from the right side. The Boston win and the Knicks' defeat maintained two streaks: Boston won its sixth straight game, and for the Knicks, it was their 24th straight defeat in the Boston Garden.

Celtic Defeat in Chicago Snaps Streak; C's Close Regular Season with Win in Philadelphia. The Celtics opened the final week of the regular season with a critical defeat in Chicago. The 111-105 loss snapped the Celtics' six-game winning streak and dropped Boston a full game behind Philadelphia. Michael Jordan led the Bulls with 35 points, and the Celtics were paced by Kevin McHale's 28 points while Robert Parish pulled down 18 rebounds. The Celtics were plagued with injury in the contest; Dennis Johnson injured his right calf and missed the entire game after the initial 14 minutes. Larry Bird, though scoring 23 points with 8 assists, was bothered by an abscess which would force him out of the remainder of the week's action. Thus, Boston trailed throughout, and were placed in a hole after a 2nd quarter 12-2 run, paced by rookie Stacey King. The Celtics trailed 55-41 at halftime but rallied late. Outscoring Chicago 34-27 in the 3rd quarter, paced by John Bagley's playmaking, the C's would rally to within

105-104. But Scottie Pippen (12 pts., 10 asts.) scored two free throws to put the game out of reach in the final seconds.

The Celtics concluded the season with three straight wins. Boston whipped the Magic the following night, 133-112, in Boston on April 18th, behind McHale's 33, and then saw their Atlantic Division title hopes vanish the following night as Philadelphia defeated homestanding Detroit, 107-97 in a fight-marred contest. Boston defeated Chicago 120-116 in Boston April 20th despite Jordan's 45, and in Philadelphia, the Celts opened up a 72-51 lead in the third quarter and withstood a rally by Philadelphia to win going away, 118-98. Neither Bird nor Johnson played in the final three games for the Celtics, and Charles Barkley missed the contest after being suspended as a result of his fighting in Detroit. Barkley was also fined \$50,000 for his part in the fight.

The Celtics therefore, closed the season with a 52-30 record, ninth best in the National Basketball Association, fourth best in the Eastern Conference. Though the team encountered much criticism this year, the Celtics' final won-loss mark still approached their 57-25 record of 1987-88, of Bird's best offensive season (29.9 ppg) and a year in which they had the best record in the Eastern Conference. And after a sluggish start this present year — in a large part because Larry was still struggling to regain his conditioning after the heel surgery which knocked him out of virtually the entire 1988-89 season — arguably, the Celtics played as well at the end of the year as the team which was defeated by Detroit in the Eastern Conference final in '87-88.

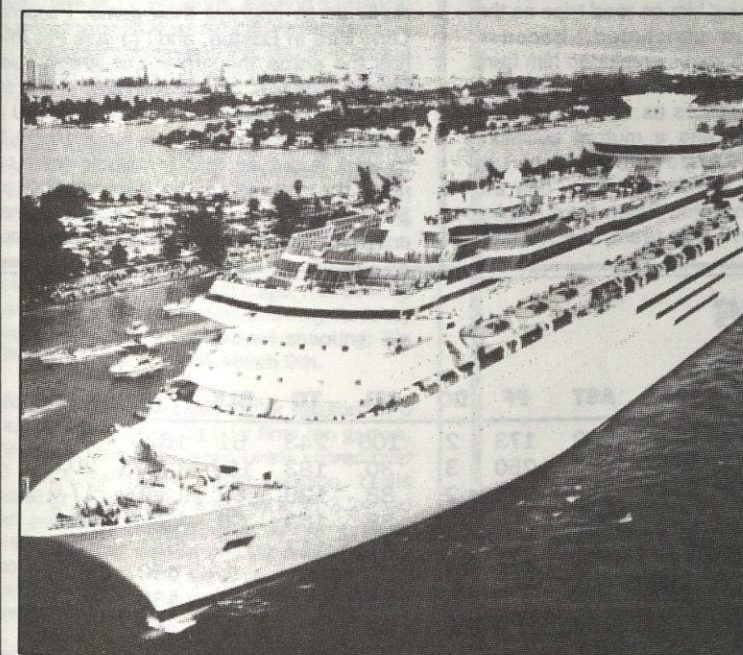
A quick synopsis of the year's highlights:

- November 20th.** Bird scores 50 vs. Hawks in 117-106 win in Garden.
- November 24th.** For second time in week, Pacers defeat the Celtics, this time in the Garden, for team's first defeat at home. The Celtics would register only a 12-8 record at home through ensuing 10 weeks.
- December 15th.** Lakers' J. Worthy scored 28 to pace LA win over C's at home, 119-110. C's record: 12-10.
- February 14th.** After Bird, McHale and Parish help key East win in All-Star game, C's begin West Coast trip strongly with wins in Houston and San Antonio. Season mark: 30-18.
- February 26th.** Considered throughout as contenders, C's close West Coast trip with 4-4 record. Sixers' coach Lynam considers C's legitimate contenders from this time on.
- March 11th.** McHale moves into starting lineup; unit of D. Johnson-Lewis-Parish-Bird-and McHale defeats 76ers, 107-105, and closes year with 18-5 record.
- March 28th.** Despite month-long 29.9 scoring by Bird, C's lose crucial road game in Philadelphia, 122-104, as Sixers close in on Atlantic Division crown.
- April 20th.** C's defeat Bulls, 120-116 despite Jordan's 45. With this win at Garden, Boston closes with 30-11 at home, 22-19 on road.

For Celtics-Knicks summary
see page 7

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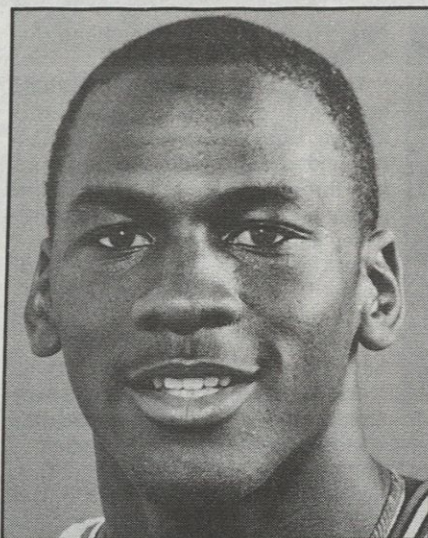


NBA Notebook

Superstars Motivate Their Teammates

By Bob Schron

MVP Candidates. The Boston Globe columnist Bob Ryan listed a top seven in the voting for Most Valuable Player honors in the league, and not necessarily in any definitive order. "It's too close a call," he stated last week. Any one of the following could win it and it would be a legitimate victory: Michael Jordan, Charles Barkley, Magic Johnson, Karl Malone, David Robinson, and Akeem Olajuwon. "People tend to overlook what Akeem accomplished over the last half of the season," Ryan summarized. "But many feel that after he overcame his leg problems in the first month of the season, that he played the best basketball of his career." ...As the regular season came to a close, Net's coach Bill Fitch, his team having finished a dismal 17-65 commented, "There will be some changes, sure. I don't think you can go through a season like this and not expect it. We'll look at films — from Game One to Game Eighty-two, and see what there is to build on." Look for the Nets to trade Dennis Hopson who apparently disappointed Fitch, and also the possibility that Chris Morris will be moved to the two guard spot...Fitch on the regular season and the differences between it and the playoffs: "I really think that what's hurt the quality of play during the regular season has been the guaranteed contract. Players pace themselves during the season. The incentive just isn't as great as it could be." Michael Jordan on the Bulls heading into the playoffs: "I feel confident about our team — but we have to have our heads in it. We have to play consistent defense, and we have to play every game with intensity. We did do well last year (The Bulls went six games in the Eastern Conference Final against Detroit). But we snuck up on people last season. Teams will be ready for us now." ...David Dupree of USA Today was skeptical of the Bulls' chances: "I just don't think they have enough. Their two main guys are what they have to go on — Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen. Their support players just don't give them enough." ...Ryan, however, disagrees and thinks that if the Bulls defeat the Bucks and the Philadelphia 76ers defeat the Cleveland Cavs in the first round, the ensuing Bulls-76ers matchup "will be a seven game classic." ...Charles Barkley, the likely Most Valuable Player this season, on his \$50,000 fine and one game suspension after the Sixers' brawl with the Detroit Pistons. Bar-

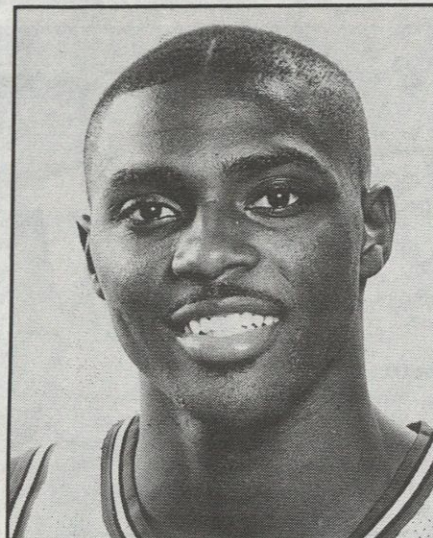


Jordan: "We have to play every game with intensity."

kley was suspended after his fight with Bill Laimbeer. "If I knew they were going to fine me that much, I would have tried to get in some more punches! I hardly landed any... Fifty thousand dollars. Whew! That's a lot of money."

Politics; after Ron Harper was acquired from the Cavs and was adjusting, the Clippers were the talk of the league, a possible playoff contender, with Danny Manning back and Harper and Manning taking charge. After Harper and Gary Grant went out with injuries, the Clippers swooned, and Casey is dismissed...Mike Fratello also stepped down as coach of the Atlanta Hawks; this was expected, as rumors floated during the Hawks' final trip here that the players had lost their incentive under Fratello, who became an excellent coach in Atlanta...K.C. Jones, Seattle assistant and former Celtic head coach, was rumored to be a candidate in Atlanta...Horace Grant, dissatisfied with his contract, demanded a trade in a published report in *The Chicago Tribune*. "We really think we have a chance to win the title this year, and I don't want anything distracting from that," he said. This has nothing to do with my teammates, the fans or the city, but you just can't be treated by the management the way I have and feel good." ...Grant, according to the report, is one of the ten lowest paid starters in the league.

Bill Fitch, Nets' coach, on the Spurs' Rookie of the Year, David Robinson: "I don't think anybody had any idea about the impact



Horace Grant: Demanding a trade

David would have. What I look at is the team's record, the way they improved their record 35 games over last season. We set the record of 32 in my first year as coach of the Celtics when we had Larry Bird as the Rookie of the Year, and Dave Cowens, Tiny Archibald and Chris Ford having great seasons as veterans. The Spurs didn't have that type of veteran leadership, and they still broke our mark. I thought that record would last a long time and it didn't even make it through a decade." ...The 1990 NBA Playoff Pool is the same as 1989, \$2.4 million, with the Lakers already claiming \$70,000 of it for achieving the best record in the NBA. LA and Detroit also won \$67,000 each for having the best conference records. For making it through the ensuing three rounds, a team would win \$34,375 for participating in the 1st round, then \$41,250 for participating in the Conference semifinals, and \$68,750 for making it to the Conference finals. The winning team in The Finals wins \$410,000. The losing unit wins \$275,000. ...Ralph Sampson's decline continued in Sacramento, where the team first stopped taking him on road trips as the regular season concluded, because Sampson's weak knees precluded him from playing. Sampson responded by refusing to dress for home games as well, though the team reported it was a mutual decision. ...Danny Ainge refused to become part of any controversy, pointing out that "only the injuries have prevented Ralph from helping us." ...Sampson's first team, the Houston

Rockets, benefited from the acquisition of Vernon Maxwell, obtained from San Antonio for cash at midseason. ... "His aggressiveness and his ability to push the ball up the floor were critical for us making the playoffs," commented Don Chaney. *The Sporting News'* Mike Weber on the New York Knicks' fall from grace late in the season and in the opening round of the playoffs: Charles Oakley's injury hurt them, yes," Weber commented. "But I just think they got bored, after playing very well for a year and a half. They played listlessly at midseason, and they never shook themselves out of it." ...As the Pistons headed into the playoffs, Chuck Daly recalled phoning John Madden, the former Oakland Raiders' coach for advice on preparing a team to defend its championship. Madden's recollection of his Raiders' failure after their Super Bowl win in 1977 was that his team tried to defend its title every single game during the regular season. By the time the playoffs arrived, his Raiders' team was burned out. ...Knicks' General Manager Al Bianchi on the trials of former Rookie of the Year, Mark Jackson. The starting point guard for two seasons, Jackson lost his starting job and most of his playing time to the veteran, Maurice Cheeks. "New York is a hard place to play," Bianchi said. "But Mark has to play his way through this. No one else can (take the fans off of his back)." ...Jerry Sloan, the Jazz coach, is rumored to be in jeopardy as coach if the Jazz fail early in the playoffs this season. After taking the Lakers to seven games in Conference semifinals two years ago, the Jazz were swept by the Warriors in 1989 as heavy favorites. ...The Jazz were the first team to lose a playoff game on their home floor last week to the Phoenix Suns. ...Seattle coach Bernie Bickerstaff was reported as criticizing the effort of his Seattle SuperSonics' team as they failed to make the playoffs this season. ...Sam Perkins, the on-again off-again free agent at the end of this season from the Dallas Mavericks, reportedly was interested in joining Don Nelson's Golden State Warriors. ...Bill Fitch on coaching superstars: "You coach them for awhile, but then, there's nothing you can really do to improve their game. I coached Larry Bird in Boston, and I'm sure Pat Riley has the same thought in Los Angeles with Magic Johnson, or Phil Jackson in Chicago with Michael Jordan. What you do is you try to build the rest of the team around them, try to work it out so that the whole team can raise their game to the superstar's level. Superstars such as Larry, Magic or Michael are great motivators for the other guys, too."

FINAL REGULAR SEASON STATISTICS

Won 52, Lost 30

Boston Celtics

82, Lost 30

PLAYER	G	GS	MIN	—FIELD GOALS—			3-PT. FG		—FREE THROWS—			—REBOUNDS—			AST	PF	DQ	STL	TO	BLK	PTS	AVG
				FG	FGA	PCT	FG	FGA	PT	FTA	PCT	OFF	DEF	TOT								
Bird	75	75	2944	718	1517	.473	65	195	319	343	.930	90	622	712	562	173	2	106	243	61	1820	24.3
McHale	82	25	2722	648	1181	.549	23	69	393	440	.893	201	476	677	172	250	3	30	183	157	1712	20.9
Lewis	79	54	2522	540	1089	.496	4	15	256	317	.808	109	238	347	225	216	2	88	120	63	1340	17.0
Parish	79	78	2396	505	871	.580	0	0	233	312	.747	259	537	796	103	189	2	38	169	69	1243	15.7
Johnson	75	65	2036	206	475	.434	1	24	118	140	.843	48	153	202	485	179	2	81	117	14	531	7.1
Paxson	72	25	1283	191	422	.453	5	20	73	90	.811	24	53	77	137	115	0	33	54	5	460	6.4
Kleine	81	4	1365	176	367	.480	0	4	83	100	.830	117	238	355	46	170	0	15	64	27	435	5.4
Gamble	71	10	990	137	301	.455	3	18	85	107	.794	42	70	112	119	77	1	28	44	8	362	5.1
M. Smith	65	7	620	136	286	.476	2	28	53	64	.828	40	60	100	79	51	0	9	54	1	327	5.0
Pinckney	77	50	1082	135	249	.542	0	1	92	119	.773	93	132	225	68	126	1	34	56	42	362	4.7
Bagley	54	17	1095	100	218	.459	1	18	29	39	.744	26	63	89	296	77	0	40	90	4	230	4.3
C. Smith	60	0	519	59	133	.444	0	7	53	76	.697	14	55	69	103	75	0	35	36	3	171	2.9
Upshaw	14	0	131	12	39	.308	2	5	4	6	.667	3	10	13	28	19	0	2	12	1	30	2.1
CELTICS	82		19705	3563	7148	.498	106	404	1791	2153	.832	1066	2707	3773	2423	1717	13	539	1256	455	9023	110.0
OPPONENTS	82		19705	3438	7383	.466	172	539	1648	2133	.773	1046	2318	3364	2078	1845	18	736	1003	356	8696	106.0

CELTICS PRIDE

By the Numbers Celts Set Record In Playoff Victory

The Celtics set or tied eight records in their Game Two 157-128 victory over the New York Knicks in the teams' opening round series. This shooting spree, highlighted by the C's record of scoring the most points in a single game, shouldn't have been that surprising: in the final month of the regular season, the Celtics registered an 18-5 record and averaged 121.4 points in this span. This figure is nearly 12 points better than their figure for the entire season, which was 110 ppg (The Celtics allowed 106 per game). Boston scored the most points Detroit allowed all season in the final month, 123, in a 123-111 win in the Garden, March 30th.

JOE KLEINE. Seven foot Kleine is shooting the ball superbly in playoffs (7-7 FGs in opening phase, including most of these from 15'). Kleine was awarded the team's Sixth Man of the Year award. In opening series averaged 7 ppg and 3 rebounds in 18.5 minutes. In game two, had 8 points, 3 rebounds and blocked shot in 23 minutes. Kleine had five games during regular season in which he had double figures in points and rebounds. Averaged 5.4 ppg with 4.4 rebounds as backup center, in 16.9 minutes during regular season.

Ed Pinckney. Season highlight was Game Two of opening round against New York when he went 6-6 from the floor, 16 points and 4 rebounds in 14 very well played minutes. After starting 's 50 times in team's initial 52 games, his playing time decreased during regular season. Averaged 4.7 ppg, 2.9 rebounds in 14.1 minutes during regular season. Averaged 9 ppg with 2 rebounds in initial phase of playoffs.

MIKE SMITH. Highlight game in opening round of playoffs was Game Two: 9 points (4-5 FGs) in 7 minutes. Played two minutes in opener and converted two FTs. Regular season averages: 5 ppg in 9.5 minutes. Regular season highlight was 7 game stretch from 2/23-3/9 when he started: 14.8 ppg, 4 rebounds, 2 assists in 27.8 minutes. Knicks' assistant coach Silas thought his contribution then was key to Celtic turnaround.

CHARLES SMITH. The other C's rookie also played key role in same time frame when he

keyed two victories on final leg of western swing, 2/23 and 2/25; 59 minutes, 11 rebounds, 16 assists, 20 points. Then, ten days later against WA, 32 minutes, 11 points, 6 rebounds and 8 assists. Demonstrated enough to merit serious consideration as backup guard at point for this team. In playoff opener, Game Two was highlight: 3 assists in 4 minutes.

KEVIN GAMBLE. Gamble's missing minutes in last six weeks due to Paxson's fine play. Retains credibility from point of view of coaches, and the media: subject of full-length column by Boston Globe's Bob Ryan 4/22. Regular season highlights included 15 ppg in three game stretch, 11/11-11/15; stint as point guard from end of December through mid-January (season high 6 assists vs. LAC on 1/5). Averaged 5.1 ppg in regular season with 1.7 assists and 1.6 rebounds. Scored record-breaking basket in team's record smashing 157-128 win over New York last week in Game Two of playoff opener.

KEVIN MCHALE. McHale was the team's leading scorer in the initial stages of the playoffs, averaging 26 ppg, with a 9.5 rebounding mark. Highlight game in the opening series was Game Two, when he shot 13-15 from the floor for 31 points, while pulling in 10 rebounds. Season average: 20.9 ppg with 8.3 rebounds and 1.91 blocks. Became the first player in the league to finish in the Top Ten in FG% and FT% since Lou Hudson did this for the Atlanta Hawks in 1969-70. McHale was 7th in FG% with .549 and 5th in FT% with .893.

LARRY BIRD. Bird immediately made statement in the opening round with a triple double in opener: 24 points, 18 rebounds, 10 assists. Followed this up with a 16 assist effort in Game Two (though shooting was off in 5-15 effort). Bird was team's leading scorer in regular season with 24.3 ppg with 9.5 rebounds and 7.5 assists (2nd highest total in his career). Led league in FT%, .930 (319-343, including the historical 71 straight, 2nd in league history. In post-season history, Bird has had five 40+ point games, most recently 42 in 2 OT win over Milwaukee Bucks in classic 7-game series. Bird missed last season's playoff because of injury.

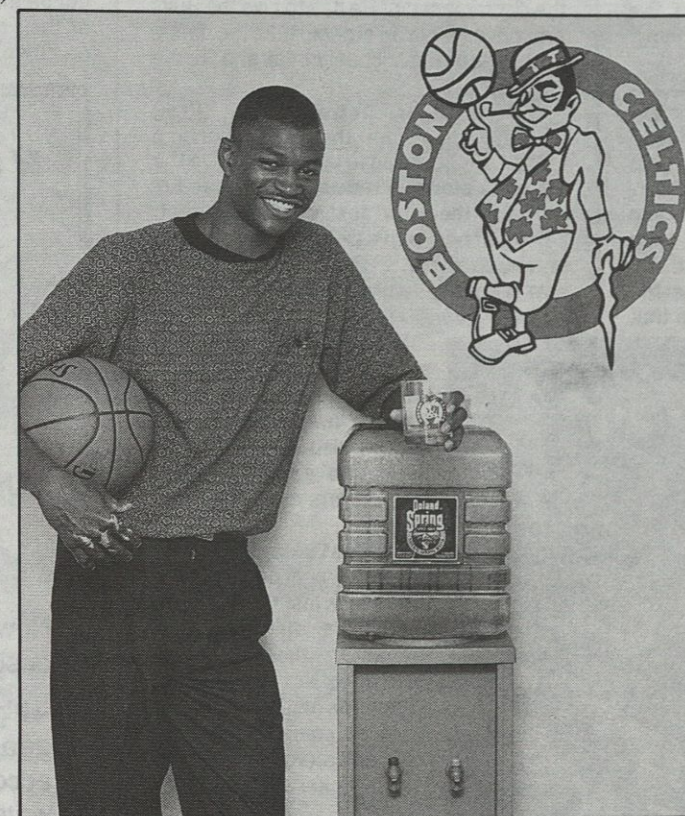
ROBERT PARISH. Parish averaged 18 ppg and 13 rebounds in opening phase of playoffs. Highlight game in opening series was Game Two when he scored 18 with 16 rebounds. Though opponent Ewing led Knicks in scoring in every game between teams, Parish continued to make mark himself. In final regular season game between teams, Parish had 25 points, 14 rebounds; in first game of regular season between teams, he had 17 rebounds. Beyond statistics, his presence on defense critical. Parish had 10+ rebounds 44 times this season. Fourth in league in FG% with .580 mark, the second highest in his career, averaged 15.7 ppg.

DENNIS JOHNSON. Starred in the first round, directing offense flawlessly. Garnered 14 points, 6 assists, 2 blocks and steal in opener and followed this with 12 points, 4 assists (5-7 FGs including his second 3-pt FG of season). Johnson averaged 7.1 ppg and 6.5 assists, the assists an improvement over a season ago. Had over 10 assists 12 times this season, and he graphically illustrated the team's improved shooting: His FG% rose 23 points since March 9th.

REGGIE LEWIS. Finished regular season on a tear, averaging 23.5 ppg over final ten games. The Celtics were 25-4 when Lewis scored over 20 points during the regular season. Lewis scored 31 when C's defeated NY in NY 3, 24 and then posted 34 in final regular season game in Boston, another win. Scored 22 and 21 in C's opening round pair of wins vs. NY. Fourth on team with 17 ppg scoring average in regular season.

JIM PAXSON. Playing his best ball in three years as key swing player off bench. Had 11 points, 5 assists in 2nd game of playoff opening round. Had strong game off bench in season's final week, though 6 point, 2 steal effort failed to prevent key 111-105 loss in Chicago, 4/17. Had 10+ points 16 times during regular season, averaging 6.4 ppg for campaign.

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What "Power" Means In The Playoffs

Tom Heinsohn Rates The Remaining Strongmen

What is the effect of power in the playoffs? In the past several seasons, the NBA playoffs have featured new and exciting stars in the postseason; in the paint, perhaps a reliable starting point in the eighties was the 1986 Finals, when Akeem Olajuwon and Ralph Sampson gave the Sweet Sixteen Celtics a tough run as that great Celtic team was winning the championship. Since then the emergence of power forwards and dominant centers have meant the difference in several playoff series, featuring young players such as Xavier McDaniel (1987), Roy Tarpley and Karl Malone (1988) and Brad Daugherty (1989). As the NBA headed into its 1990 renewal of postseason activities, Celtics Pride asked Tom Heinsohn, color analyst for CBS and Sportschannel, to analyze some of the key power players this playoff season, the ones who may have the most to do with their team success.

"Undoubtedly, the players inside make a difference," commented Heinsohn. "They have all season, and there's no reason to think that will stop now."

"But the best teams in the playoffs don't necessarily depend on their power players. What about the Lakers? They won five championships, and they did it by running. This has to be considered."

Akeem Olajuwon, Houston. "He's probably the most dominant center in the game, and I'd have to think that of all the players in the postseason, he's the most influential, the player who has the most to do with the success or failure of his team. He's big, strong, a great jumper with great timing. His trouble areas are two: He plays the Lakers in the first round, with a team that

just doesn't look as if they have enough to compete."

Karl Malone, Utah. "He's a legitimate Most Valuable Player award winning candidate. He's helped of course because he has (7'4") Mark Eaton behind him, and that gives him free reign. I think a turning point in his career came in 1988, when he almost took Utah past the Lakers in the playoffs. He hasn't stopped since. As far as forwards go, there aren't any more intimidating."

Charles Barkley, Philadelphia. "Barkley and Malone are tied this year. It was Barkley's best season, all-around. But Barkley's different, a player who's a 'power' player, but he does it at 6' 5". He's done it this season: leadership, drive, able to play under control. If the 76ers are to go anywhere, he's going to have to show he can do it (in the playoffs), as well as the regular season."

Bill Cartwright, Chicago. "In the playoffs, Cartwright's effectiveness will be a critical factor in determining how far the Bulls can go. I'm not saying that Cartwright is one of the three or four best in the league. However, he played a critical role for the Bulls last year, and they nearly won the championship. He has to give the Bulls presence inside, in order to take the defensive pressure off Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen."

Bill Laimbeer, Detroit. "With (Rick) Mahorn gone from their championship team, Laimbeer has to continue to give the Pistons defensive rebounding. James Edwards is their low post offensive threat. Laimbeer has to give Detroit double figures in rebounding. It's critical for their defensive presence, which was critical for Detroit last year."

Rick Mahorn, Philadelphia. "His importance can't be overstated. He gave the 76ers a low post game, and he was also part of their offense. He gave the 76ers wing players room to get out and run."

Charles Oakley, New York. "When he went out in March, the Knicks lost their rhythm. They were still struggling then, but without him, they were unable to regroup altogether. His rustiness showed when he came back during the Celtics (Knicks) series. The Knicks were out of synch."

Kevin McHale-Robert Parish, Boston. "The Celtics' strength has always been in the paint. But McHale isn't a 'power' player. He's fast! Parish is strong and what he adds to the Celtic defense is consistency and reliability. When Robert's in the game, the Celtics' defense is three times as good."

Kevin Duckworth, Portland. "Portland was the best team in the league, from the teams I've seen, heading into the playoffs. Duckworth plays his role to perfection—strong, physical enough to control the paint, and a will-

ingness to allow the Blazer stars like Clyde Drexler and Terry Porter to do their thing. Buck Williams meant a lot to that team—veteran leadership."

"Obviously, every team in the NBA has a power player, but that doesn't necessarily matter. It's how you use that power. A majority of the influence an inside player has depends on the team he's on."

"I'm still a proponent of the running game. The inside game takes on more importance in the playoffs because the postseason becomes more a halfcourt game. That's been the history—teams become more conservative. But I don't think that's necessarily the whole story, however. Rotating defenses have negated inside players. You have 6'8" guards, and when they double down, the inside game can be removed altogether. Defenses challenge their opponents' outside shooters to beat them. That's why the running game is so critical. It's why I point to the Lakers' success; notice there aren't any 'power' players from the Lakers there, but arguably, with Portland, heading into the playoffs, they were the favorites. And look at the success the Celtics had against New York. It was based on pressuring the Knicks out on the perimeter, taking New York out of their offense, negating Patrick Ewing, and then, getting out and running."



"Barkley's a 'power' player, but he does it at 6'5".

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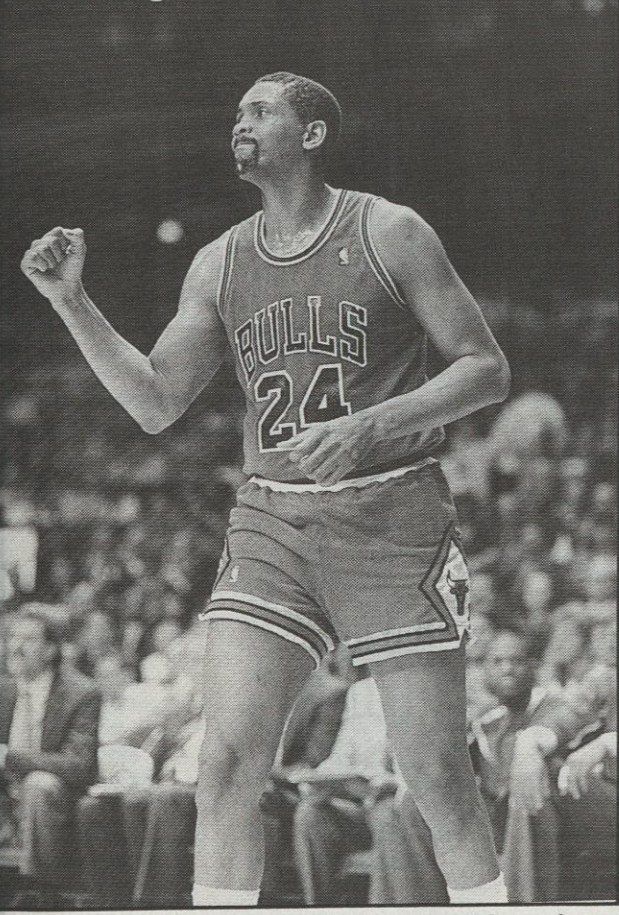
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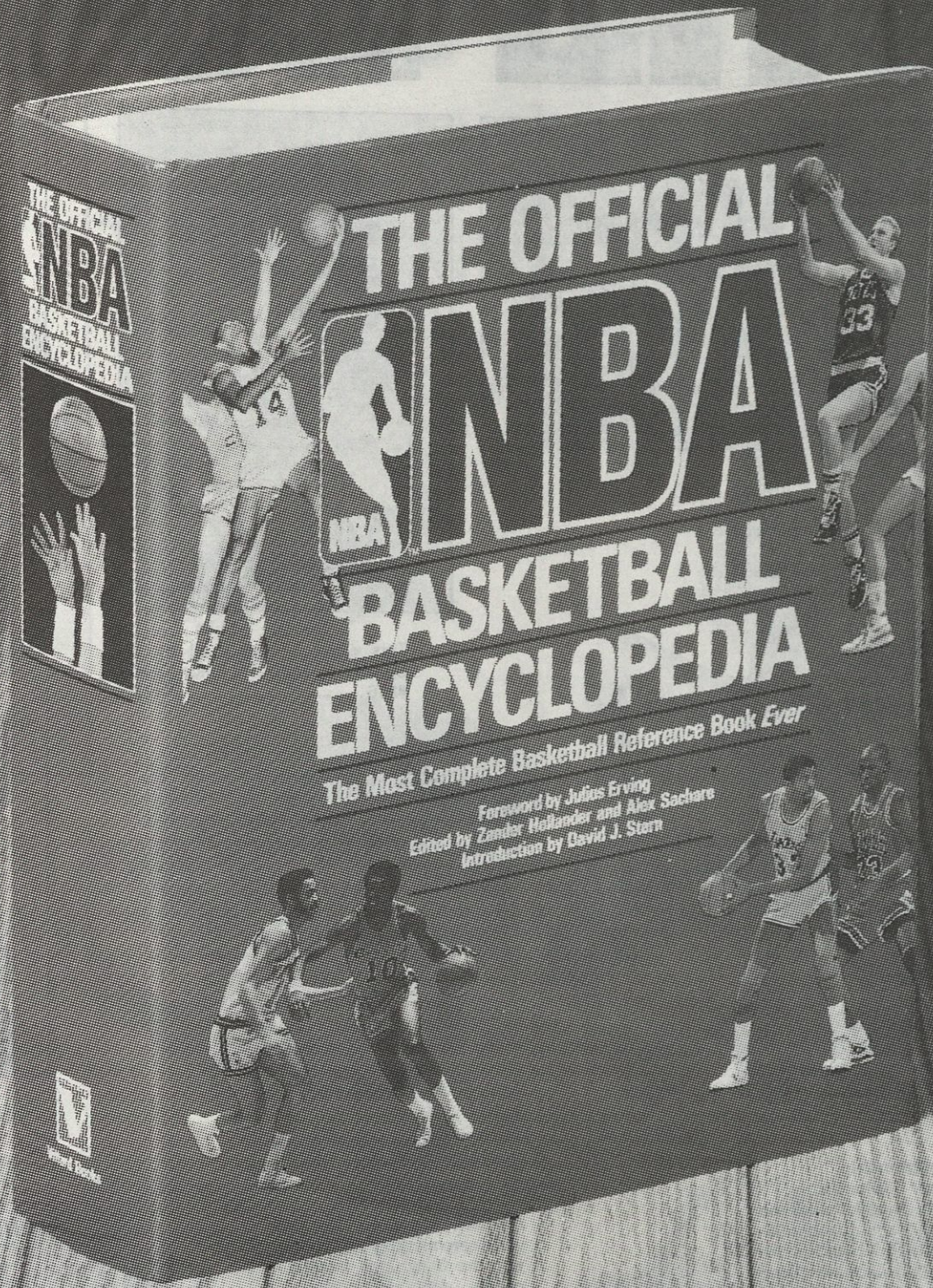
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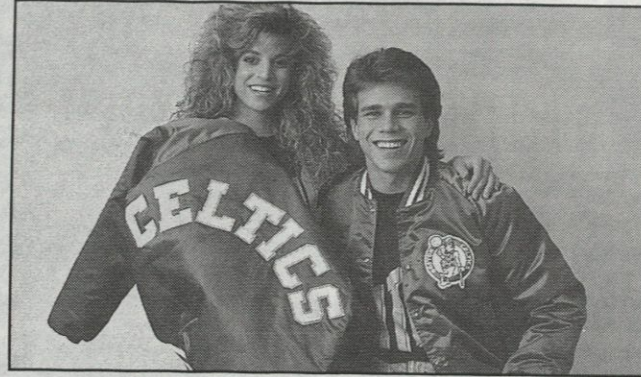
"Net" T-Shirt

Heavy duty shirt with a new puff-print design on the net. Celtics is in green with a yellow outline. #230\$13.95



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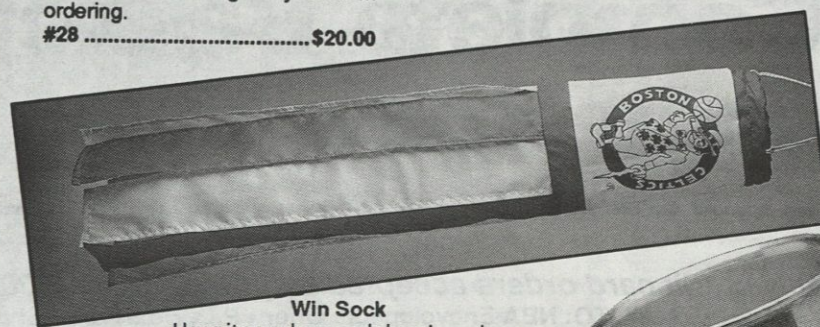
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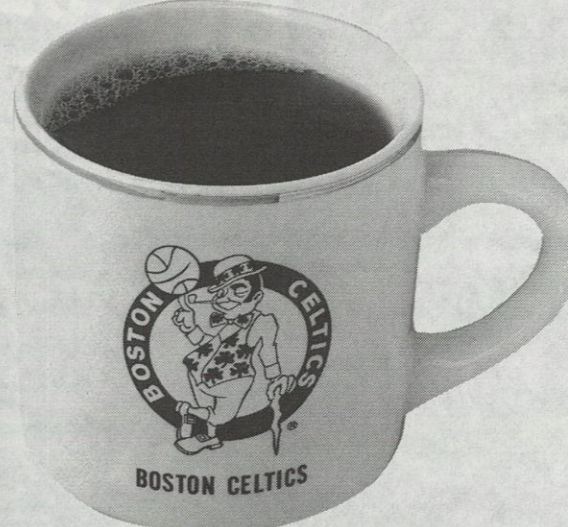
Tankard

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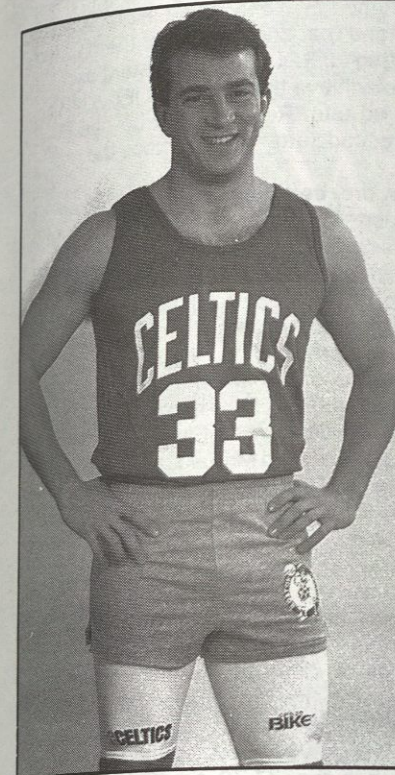
Fan Pak

This set includes a 3 1/2" button, 12" sticker and a 30" pennant. All for a very low price. #19\$4.99



Camp Shirt

New item! Cotton, button down the front camp shirt. Available in white short-sleeves with imprinted front and Celtics logo on the back. #31\$19.95



#33 Tank Top

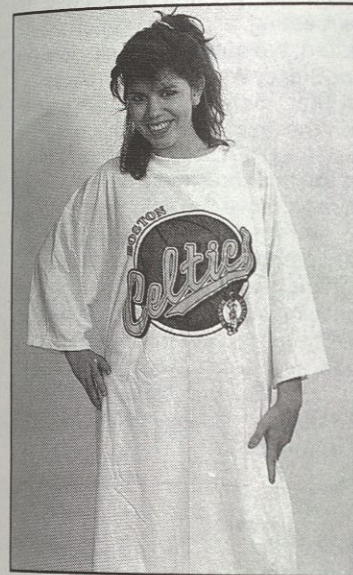
This green tank is all BIRD front and back. #239\$19.95

Shorts

Old stand-by grey athletic shorts with Celtics logo on left leg. #20\$15.50

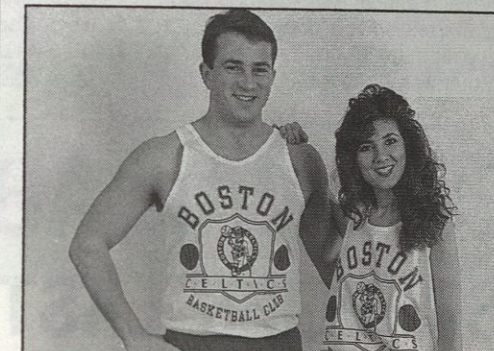
CPS Shorts

You've seen the pros wear them under their uniform, and now you can get that same extra support. Available in white with Celtics in green on right. Men's sizes: S(30-32), M(34-36), L(38-40). #23\$26.00



Sleep Shirt

Super fans will love this super-sized T-shirt. Jumbo NEW graphics are screened on the front, the basketball is in color and Celtics is written in gold. Can be worn as a beach cover-up, night shirt, or dress. One size fits all. #25\$19.95



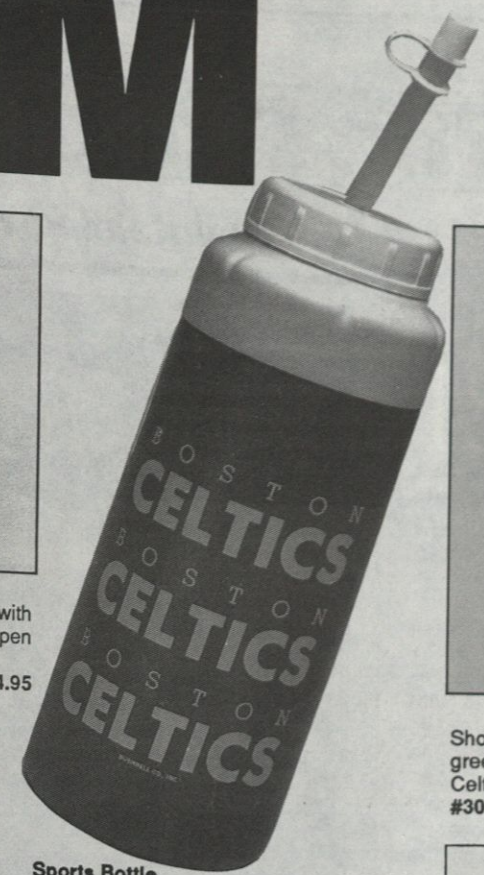
Tank Top

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Pens

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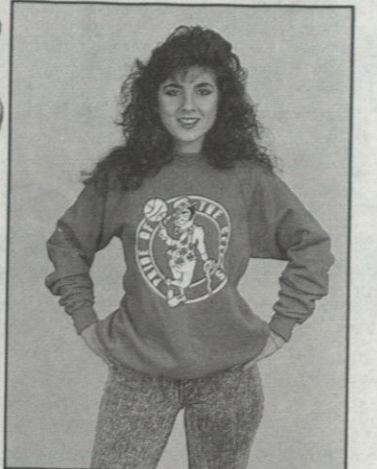
Key Ring

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Show off your Celtic Pride in this kelly green sweatshirt with the Boston Celtic logo in white. #30\$19.95



Jumbo Sweatshirt

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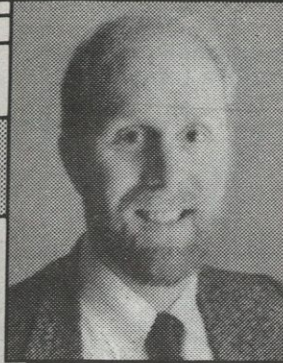
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By Glenn Rifkin

The Fan's Eyeview

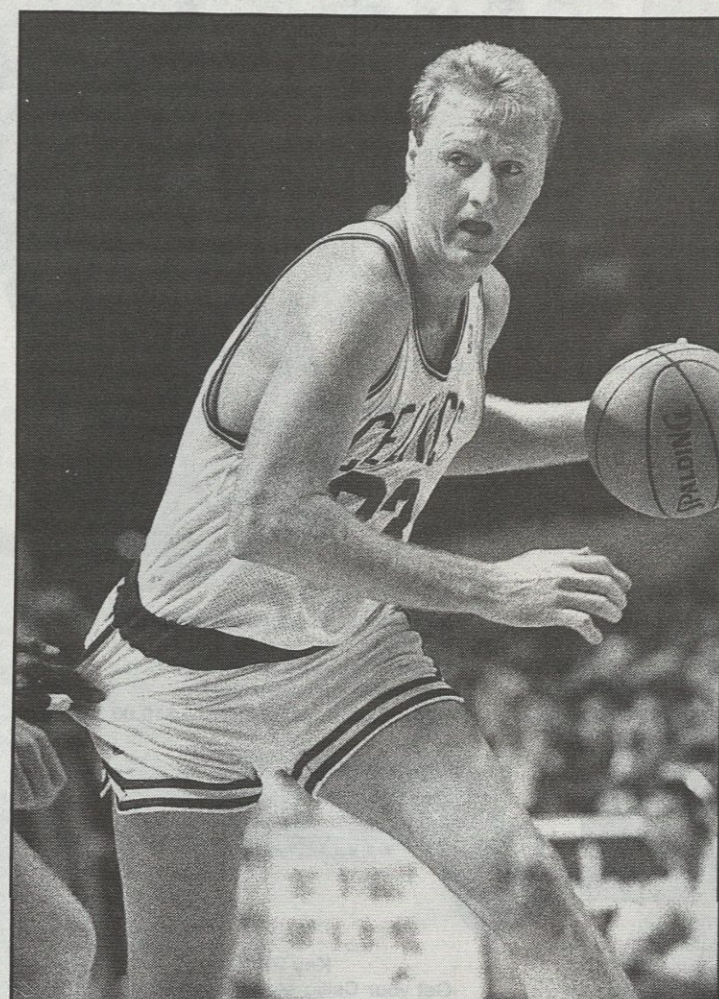
Maintaining That Winning Tradition

We're in the middle of the NBA playoffs. The Celtics are here, where they belong. No one thinks they can go all the way. Good. If they do, that makes it that much sweeter.

Being a Celtic fan puts you in an elite group. There is no other sports organization that has maintained a level of excellence for so long, year in and year out (with a few exceptions) up to the present. The New York Yankees from the 1920s to the early 1960s were such a group. The Montreal Canadiens until this decade were such a group. The Dallas Cowboys for about 15 years were such a group. The Lakers are there lurking at the edge, but they spent two decades in the Celtics' shadow before they went on their 80s tear.

So here we are, watching from the oddest perch. If we win the title, we have to squeeze in another banner to the rafters of the Garden. This year, more than a few eyebrows would be raised and it would be considered an upset. But we would know that championships are what the Celtics are all about. We would love it. We would go crazy and dance on Causeway Street on a warm June night. But we would be like the rich man who wins the lottery. We don't really need that extra banner to know how rich we really are.

Being rich breeds jealousy and envy. It also breeds more than a bit of animosity. We've squirmed in our seats the past two seasons and watched as upstart teams came into the Garden with losing local records longer than a Logan runway and took victories from our boys. We read with a grimace about how that ends such and



There is a post-Bird future for the Celtics.

such a streak for so and so a team in the Garden. And we sighed. Because we knew by looking at the faces of the visiting players what the victory meant. This was not just another road win. No way. Beating

the Celtics in Boston was like winning a mini-championship, settling a very old score, giving the tough guys a taste of their own medicine.

We can't blame them. It can't be easy to run smack into domination year after year after year without feeling annoyed and frustrated. Those feelings build up, like a long-term bank account. And when the chance comes for an interest payment, it feels good to fondle that check.

But part of the fun of a dynasty like the Celtics is that you can chip away at the edges, but you cannot make a dent of any noticeable size. Chip, chip, chip, and we are still the Boston Celtics. You can't have our banners, and give us a call when you get ten in your building. We'll still have six more than you and more on the way. We need about five solid years in the tank, five to

ten New Jersey Nets seasons, to tarnish the shine. And unless Red Auerbach, Jan Volk and the rest of this organization are kidnapped and taken to Lapland for a decade, that won't happen.

As the playoffs precede, the underlying theme of every game is a subtle tip of the hat to Auerbach and the Celtics. The theme is a quest for excellence, a search for stepping up to a higher plane. It is what the Celtics have done seemingly forever in the NBA. Right now, only the Lakers really understand that and we look at them with admiration for it. It takes consistent excellence to achieve this level and it ought to be named after Red because he has defined it decade after decade since the mid-1950s.

It may only be a hundred years from now that sports historians really appreciate what Red has done. It's one thing to win nine championships in 11 years. It's quite another to hit a few troughs but rebuild almost immediately back to that level on at least three other occasions.

Fans around here and the nation say the Celtics are in for a fall when the big three retire in the next two or three years. Without Bird, Parish and McHale the Celtics will drop to a level of mediocrity and will remain far from the league's elite teams. Don't count on it.

First of all, this particular group isn't going anywhere for a while and they can still show how it's done. We think next season is filled with promise because we've got a slick, young guard returning and the unit that has finally melded this season should be ready to soar next year.

But look beyond that, to the unknown. Remember the 77-78 timeframe, when John Havlicek retired and Larry Bird was a stranger in Indiana. Oh, how bleak it was. We took a beating and the rest of the league feasted. We suffered through John Y. Brown and Sidney Wicks and even Marvin Barnes. All that seems like another era, and it was. The front office flinched but didn't waiver. It set out to find another road back to the top and three more banners fly in the rafters to prove the point.

Red can't go on forever. But Jan Volk learned very carefully at Red's side. And this front office is a savvy group that was weaned on winning. They won't accept mediocrity. There is a post-Bird future. You hang around and watch it happen. Don't worry about it. In fact, don't give it another thought. Sit back and enjoy. We're Celtics fans.....we know how.

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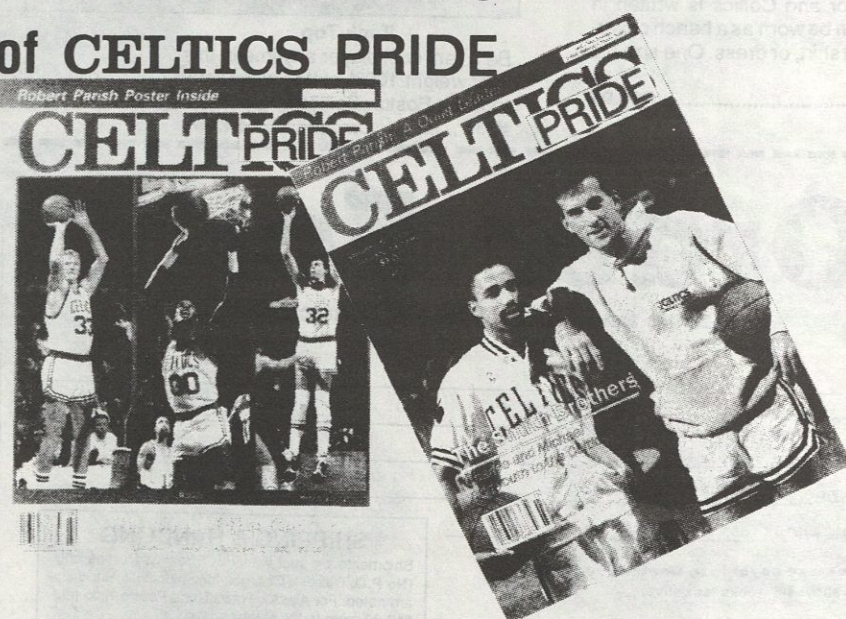
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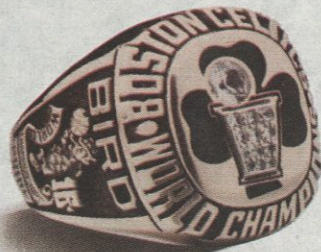
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